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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A LOT OF KNOWLEDGE - A LOT OF SUPPORT: EMPOWERING REENTRY WOMEN

BY

LORI ANNE CAMPBELL

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTERS OF EDUCATION

IN

ADULT AND HIGHER EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT, CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1990

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SUBMITTED BY: LORI ANNE CAMPBELL

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE: MASTERS OF EDUCATION IN ADULT AND HIGHER EDUCATION.

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Dr. F. Ilott

Dr. G. Hess

Dr. R. Sydie

Date: October 4 1990

This Thesis is Dedicated to My Parents:

Pat Campbell
who embodied everything good about the teaching profession

and

Bill Campbell
who claimed not to mind hearing about it all those years

I miss them both.

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the impact a Canadian Jobs Strategy Reentry program had on four women. The specific problem under investigation was whether a reentry program in Edmonton empowered the participants. Part of the problem included an investigation into the usage of the term "empowerment" in a pedagogical sense.

This is research with a feminist intent and utilizing qualitative methodology. Four women were interviewed, once individually and once in a group, and their reflections form the basis of the response to the problem. The interview were supplemented by three other sources of data: daily logs and formative and summative evaluation records kept by staff, participants and supervisors in the hospitality industry. It was found that belonging to a group of women with shared experiences and interests was the greatest determining factor in the participants perceived ability to take actions based on their own values, interests and needs. This ability, to them, was the essence of personal power.

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Chapter I

The Problem

> It [work] made me feel like I was important and I could do something well. You know, it really made me feel...it built up my esteem. When I was at work and knew I was doing a good job then I knew I was worth something. It's strange.
>
> Lois
> Interview #1

Women and Labour Market Poverty

What is a personal reflection here for a participant is, also a commonly held assumption about work in general: work is meaningful and those who work are happier than those who don't. This oft expressed view can also take the form of criticism of those who do not work or are on social assistance: "I'd never go on welfare. I'd do anything rather than that." More often than not, this assertion is made by those who are not likely to be faced with such a choice. However, work for the sake of work alone is not necessarily meaningful or even desirable. For those who live on the periphery of a working world characterized by financial and personal reward, poverty is a constant threat, if not companion - whether they work or not.

The threat of poverty is especially poignant for women. Over the last few years, there has been an increasing number of women entering the workforce. Seven out of ten people who entered the workforce between 1976 and 1985 were women (Wismer, 1988). But while women appear to have increasing access to paid employment, paradoxically they are also becoming increasingly vulnerable to poverty. In Canada, from 1971 to 1986, poverty for women increased by 100.3% while correspondingly, men's poverty increased by 23.8% (Gunderson and Murszynski, 1990). This curious rise in the rates of poverty, (taken here to mean the inability to earn enough money to place one over a statistically defined poverty line), paired with increased employment of women has been coined the "feminization of poverty;" despite advances on social and economic fronts including policies such as affirmative action, women continue to swell the ranks of the poor. A man's unemployment can usually be tied directly to labour market conditions but an understanding of women's unemployment and poverty must take into account the uniqueness of their position as those who bear children. This distinction influences their access to employment, the type of employment they secure and their patterns of interaction with the labour market. As the authors of one study put it, "Women enter the labour market always as past, present, or future mothers (Gunderson and Muszynski, 1990, p. 48)."

If the woman is a single mother, problems associated with employment and poverty become that much more acute. The rate of poverty for female single parents living in Canada in 1986, was 44.1% compared to 8.6% for those living in couple families (Gunderson and Muszynski, 1990). Single female parents bear the entire burden of child care, financially and psychologically, along with the other expenses that are part of having a job such as transportation and clothing costs. Further, women are consistently over-represented in occupations that seem a natural extension of their helpmate role such as waitressing (Wismer, 1988). These occupations are characterized by low pay, high vulnerability to technological change, low union penetration, little or no benefits and a high percentage of part-time positions (Wismer, 1988; MacDonald, 1985). Sometimes poor women find that it makes more economic sense to remain on the welfare rolls than to seek employment that does not begin to compensate for the work related expenses (Gunderson and Muszynski, 1990).

Far from the picture that work and economic independence go hand in hand, holding a job does not guarantee that any woman or man will escape poverty. Even full-time workers account for 29.6% of the "working poor (Gunderson and Muszynski, 1990)." In short, 1.3 million Canadians who worked in 1986 were still unable to secure a wage that placed them above the poverty line (Gunderson and Muszynski, 1990). But despite the disincentives to work that this statistical picture represents, women still look for work and do so for a variety of reasons. Outstanding among those reasons, however, is necessity. Women who find themselves with changing financial responsibilities, can be thrust back into the job market where they often find themselves under-skilled, under-educated and lacking valuable recent employment experience. Despite what some think, this movement back and forth across employment lines makes the social assistance population remarkably unstable. The majority of single mothers in this population will eventually leave social assistance either through work, marriage or a combination of both (Gunderson and Muszynski, 1990):

> Women's use of welfare is intermittent despite the widespread perception that women are on welfare for overly long periods. There is considerable movement out of poverty and off welfare for most single mothers and the majority of them who use welfare do so for relatively short periods of time (p. 194).

Society sometimes views all poor people as belonging to a distinct social class, when, in fact, the poor represent a variety of people from all walks of life. The only thing that all poor people have in common is their economic status. By the same token, however, a reentry women grapples with the perplexities of a changing work world in much the same way as women in similar economic positions do. In addition, it is likely that she will face the barrier of responsibility for child care. So despite what sets the reentry woman apart from her peers, the homogeneity of her experiences as a woman in a particular economic grouping allows training personnel and program planners to address her as a special case. This research is about women in one such program.

Programs which attempt to assist women in re-entering the labour market are the target of many criticisms but are often the only alternative available. The difficulties with reentry programs will be examined in greater detail in a later chapter but it should be mentioned here that these programs tend to target poorly paid occupations which are also particularly vulnerable to technological change (Wismer, 1988; Dance and Witter, 1988). In this sense, re-entry programs become part of the problem rather than the solution (Gunderson and Muszynski, 1990; Wismer, 1988; Dance and Witter, 1988). This is discouraging news for the dedicated trainer:

> It's built in - this idea that they -- the trainees are broke and we (the trainers) are going to fix them. But of course there's nothing wrong with those women really and it's impossible to expect a 9 or 12 month program to catapult them into $30,000/year jobs. Unfortunately, they tend to blame each other (Wismer, 1988, p.13).

The women who attend these programs must certainly be driven by the need to achieve some kind of economic independence but the truth often dawns that no such goal will be realized within the context of the program. Why do they continue to participate instead of following the normal route of dissent for unhappy adult student: leaving the class? Is it possible that other outcomes, intended or not, justify their continued participation in their own mind? Chesler (1976) suggests that "much of what women do and feel stems from a need to avoid something worse than to achieve something better (p. 107), and for some women, marginal improvement in their economic condition is better than none at all (Wismer, 1988). However, testimony from women across Canada who have participated in reentry programs does not, for the most part, speak of disillusionment but of new hopes and dreams (McFarland, 1988). What accounts for the difference in perception between the participants on the one hand and the program critics on the other?

The Question of Empowerment

Those who write about reentry programs for women often refer to some aspect of the program which is meant to empower the participants. The ambiguity which surrounds this notion of empowerment leaves the reader considering a broad range of activities and goals. For reentry women, one of these goals must surely include some potential for financial reward. Even if economic power is not the only sort of power an individual has, it is an extremely useful power. As the expression goes, "Money can't buy happiness but it can buy some pretty good substitutes." If these programs do not always offer women an opportunity to gain access to economic power, what can the authors of program descriptions mean when they talk about empowering women? This research seeks to investigate, within the context of a specific reentry program, what aspects of the program were empowering from the participants' point of view. By doing so, the researcher hopes to illuminate those program areas which might become part of a larger vision of what empowerment means for reentry women including but not limited to, economic power. The researcher also hopes to more specifically address what educators are talking about when they talk about empowerment. If empowering is, or should be, a legitimate function of adult education, then it must be used in terms that make sense, not only to other educators, but to learners as well. The clarity of our vision as adult educators will ultimately determine whether we are in the business of empowerment or merely manipulating our students to suit our own professional goals or values (Fletcher, 1987)

Importance of the Study

Job re-entry programs have come under attack from several quarters, most notably the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (Wismer, 1988), for not making any significant differences in the working lives of women. Critics (Wismer, 1988; MacDonald, 1985) argue that until issues like wage disparity are addressed, these programs simply perpetrate the cycle of poverty for women because they slot them into low paying occupations.

This study investigates, through a look at dependence and empowerment for women, whether the particular program the researcher participated in, Women in the Hospitality Industry, offered the participants gains in areas, other than economic, and it seems only logical to go directly to the participants for the information. Debate over the efficacy of re-entry programs is often takes place between individuals who fund and execute the programs and outside parties, looking in. The participants in these re-entry programs are in a better position to tell us what benefits can be derived from these programs and this study gives them the opportunity to do so.

Background to the Problem

This thesis focuses on the experience of women in a specific job re-entry program entitled Women in the Hospitality Industry and funded by Employment and Immigration (EIC) Canada and part of a six prong attack by EIC to help the unemployed in Canada enter the labour force. Job re-entry is part of the job entry initiative which specifically targets youth and re-entry women. Job entry, together with five other streams, make up the Canadian Jobs Strategy (CJS). The goals of the CJS, are as follows (Wismer, 1988, p. 91):

> SKILL INVESTMENT is the initiative geared to workers whose jobs are threatened by changing technology and economic conditions.
>
> SKILL SHORTAGES is designed to alleviate existing and potential critical skill shortages by equipping workers with specialized training.
>
> JOB DEVELOPMENT is aimed at increasing the employability of the long-term unemployed.
>
> JOB ENTRY assists women and youth in entering or re-entering the labour market.
>
> COMMUNITY FUTURES targets workers in communities who face chronic unemployment, plant closures, severe economic decline, or layoffs.
>
> INNOVATIONS promotes the design of innovative programs and initiatives to address labour market problems.

The goals of the CJS are realized by various agencies who, through the proposal process, identify a group within a stream and apply for funds to execute a program. In 1986-87, program costs totalled $2,013.5 million and across the country 463.4 thousand Canadians took part in programs funded by CJS. In the Edmonton region alone, for the period 1989-1990, 464 women participated in re-entry programs (CJS, Edmonton Regional Office). While the CJS goals are broadly stated for Federal purposes, specific regions across Canada attempt to respond to specific regional needs. The program I participated in, and the program of interest for this research, was a Job Re-entry program for women entering the hospitality industry which ran from October 16, 1989 to April 12, 1990.

The primary goal of Women in the Hospitality Industry training program was "...to assist women in re-entering the labour force after a period of unemployment or part time employment," and this goal was to be accomplished by attention to the following objectives (Women in the Hospitality Industry, 1988):

1. Providing the participants with a coordinated and well integrated combination of off-site training and on-site training.

2. Providing the participants with an effective base of practical skills and industry specific skills to enhance opportunities for employment and professional growth.

3. Providing the participants with the necessary life skills to effectively cope with the demands of the work place and to adopt norms of behaviour typical of individuals at the supervisory levels of employment.

4. Enhancing the employers' awareness of and commitment to the provision of structural training for the participants for the long-term benefit of the host company.

5. Supporting and promoting the collaborative efforts of industry, government, and the community in meeting society's training and development needs.

6. Promoting the interests of social assistance recipients. It is our intent and belief that, upon successful completion of this program, the participants will have sufficient training, experience, and exposure to gain permanent positions with their host organizations.

In order to achieve these objectives, the program planners felt the need to be aware of, and sensitive to, the needs of women and to the presence of both systemic (ie. related to the system such as transportation) and attitudinal (ie. self-esteem) barriers to their successful re-entry. Further, it was felt that systemic barriers would have to be addressed before the participants could concentrate on the more difficult task of attitudinal change. Therefore, the program provided the women with practical necessities such as clothing allowances, bus passes and specific skill training courses such as word processing or bartending.

The seven month program had five program components, each dealing with specific areas but with these areas often overlapping. Each component was directed at the development of certain knowledge, attitudes and skills, and each component was designed to facilitate the achievement of the program objectives. Program components included, lifeskills, general and specific occupational skill, work experience, and job search. The components are described in detail below.

Lifeskills was the component designed to address the attitudinal barriers to successful re-entry, and the main goal of the lifeskills component was affective change. This was the first part of the program. It ran continuously for three weeks, after which various life skill themes were reviewed or re-introduced over the seven month course of the program. Topics included in this section were self assessment, attitudes, motivation, values, assertiveness, self-esteem, women's issues, dressing for success and professional work image, stress management, personal finance, leisure time, and community support networks.

I was the principle trainer for the lifeskills component with the program drawing on other community resources for some of the topics. The content and delivery of lifeskills was left, for the most part, to my discretion although I was required to cover the topics presented in the original proposal.

During the three weeks the participants kept a daily log of their experiences in and out of the classroom. As well, the researcher continued to maintain a relationship with the women throughout the entire program once her official role of trainer had ended. The staff felt that this continued relationship would provide some continuity for the women over the seven months and thus, the women were encouraged to view the researcher in a somewhat less formal role than the other two staff members.

General Occupational Skills were designed to give the participants various occupational skills which could be transferable from one working context to the next. As well, this component provided the participants with an overview of some of the issues and structures they may encounter in the working world. Topics included in this section were employer/employee relations, first aid, the hospitality industry, occupational health and safety, human rights, and customer relations. Two weeks of this component were devoted to supervision skills which included topics such as motivation, conflict resolution, problem solving in groups, and dealing with difficult people. Supervision skills and the majority of the other occupational skills were delivered by content experts.

Specific occupational skills were specific to the hospitality industry and the training for this component was conducted at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) by qualified instructors. Participants spent one week of instruction on food and beverage controls and a second week on commercial cooking. Although many of the participants did not subsequently find employment in areas which utilized these skills (and this was anticipated), the objective here was to allow the participants insight into the typical operation of a large hotel.

On-site or work experience was the actual work experience provided for the participants and accounted for approximately 13 weeks of the total program. The participants were given the opportunity to apply for those positions which seemed best suited to their training and personal needs and were then interviewed by representative of the training place hosts (TPH). The coordinator then matched participant with TPH. Participants began their on-site training in the sixth week of the program and continued their training until the program's conclusion. On-site training was combined with classroom days with time in class decreasing as the program progressed. The desired outcome of this component was a permanent job placement at the end of the program.

The job search component was allotted six classroom days and included such job search skills as resume writing and interviewing techniques. Two sessions on entrepreneurship were also included in this component.

The program ran from October 16 to April 12, 1990, and also included during this time three, one-to-one feedback sessions, an informal individualized feedback session with the participants, and two on-site evaluation sessions conducted between a member of the project staff, the TPH, and the participant. All participants received training allowances during the program and 24 out of the original 25 participants finished the program. Twenty out of the 24 secured employment at program's end (See Appendix for schedule of on-site and classroom activities).

Problem Statement

The question of whether the program was successful or not depends largely on who is asked. Given the goals of the CJS and the financial commitment to the program on the part of EIC, success for the project manager, was measured in terms of employment figures at the end of the program. The project coordinator and her partner viewed success from different vantage points, depending upon the professional "hat" they were wearing at the time. As an adult educator the coordinator viewed success as "having the women move one step closer to self-directedness," but as the person accountable for the program, she saw success in the low turnover rate and high retention of the participants. Her partner described success in much the same vein, citing absence of drop-outs as a reliable indicator. As a businessman, however, he also took into account the financial success of the program. Finally, as an adult educator, he looked for observable, positive behavioral changes in the women[1]. From the point of view of the researcher, success was measured in terms of affective change and the ability of these women to cope successfully with issues in their personal and professional lives. As the lifeskills instructor and as a member of the coordinating team the goal was to move these women towards personal empowerment and thus it became my research goal to see if and to what extent the program met these goals. Stated more formally, the problem under investigation is as follows: From the participant's perspective, what were the empowering aspects of a job reentry program for women?

---

[1] I am indebted to the program coordinator and her partner for sharing these perceptions with me.

Focus Questions

The question under investigation can be further clarified by the consideration of these focus questions:

1. What does the concept of power mean for women?
2. What aspects of a job reentry program for women were empowering?
3. What aspects of a job reentry program for women were not empowering?
4. What aspects of a job reentry program for women moved the participants towards independence or dependence.

Assumptions

The participants in this study are able to recapture and articulate their impressions of a program which occurred over a seven month span, and that they are able to share those impressions with the researcher.

The time between the end of the program and the beginning of data collection will influence the participants' perceptions of the program because they will have had the opportunity to reflect on the experience. Any difference in participant observations will be noted in the interpretation of the data.

Delimitations of the Study

This research emphasizes description rather than evaluation. Of interest is how four women describe their experiences in a job reentry program. Evaluation of the program itself is only minimally explored. This research looks at the experience of four women in a particular reentry program, and the results are not meant to speak for other women in other programs.

Limitations of the Study

This research project recognizes that there are many agents of change which operate in a adult's life and that it is difficult if not impossible to differentiate among these agents of change and the contexts in which they occur. This research is specifically interested in the role the job re-entry program played in affecting change in the participants' lives. Therefore, the method of data collection and the style of interviewing will reflect this interest. It is understood, however, that changes identified by the participants will not always be attributable to aspects of the job re-entry program. The use of other sources of data will help to minimize this particular limitation (See Sources of Data, p.46).

The context of this research is one CJS reentry program in Edmonton and the results are not applicable to other job reentry programs or other reentry populations.

This research project represents several "snapshots in time," attempting to recapture the experience of one program lasting over a relatively short period.

Definition of Terms

Dependence - reliance on a person, group, organization, or system to such an extent that the individual is not able to function autonomously. Dependence can be emotional, physical, psychological or economic.

Power - the ability to realize intended outcomes.

Empowerment - the process of obtaining or discovering power[2].

Training Place Host - this is a private organization in the hospitality industry that agrees to train a program participant in a specified occupation. The participant is not paid by the training place host and is still accountable to the CJS project.

Hospitality Industry - the hospitality industry includes any business whose main outcome is to provide hospitality related services to the public (eg. restaurants, hotels).

Off-site Training - that training which occurs in places other than the workplace.

On-site Training - training which takes place at the workplace.

---

[2] These two concepts will be explored at greater length in chapter four - "Women and Power." p. 59.

Trainer - the individual who leads a specific section of the reentry program. This program involved two principal trainers: the researcher and "Peter." The researcher was responsible for lifeskills and the job search component while Peter was responsible for Supervision training. He also assisted the project coordinator in managing the program on a day-to-day basis.

"Conflict Day" - A specific day during the section on Supervision when Peter attempted to deal directly with conflict that had developed in the group.

Project coordinator - the individual who manages the day to day operation of a reentry project.

Project manager - the individual who is a representative of the federal government and oversees the coordination of different CJS projects in a region. The program coordinator is accountable to the project manager.

Abbreviations

SAR - Social Assistance Recipients

TPH - Training Place Host

EIC - Employment and Immigration Canada

CJS - Canadian Jobs Strategy

NAIT - Northern Alberta Institute of Technology

Summary

Despite women's increased participation in the labour force, they continue to be particularly vulnerable to poverty. This is especially true of single female heads of households who are often better off financially, remaining on social assistance than accepting poorly paid jobs. These jobs, often in the service sector, continue to have an over-representations of female employees and are sometimes seen as a natural extension of a woman's nurturing ole.

While men's poverty is more directly linked to labour market conditions, women's poverty must also be understood in the context of their roles in society. Women continue to be assigned the primary caregiver role and their reproductive choices affect their labour market participation at every stage. Because all women potentially share the function of child-rearing, there is a common element that binds them together, irrespective of their economic position. Reentry women, in particular, share many issues and cope with very similar barriers. For this reason, they are often treated as a homogeneous group and programs are designed which attempt to account for their common experiences.

Publicly funded reentry programs claim to empower women without being clear on what that activity entails. Often these programs perpetrate the cycle of poverty for women by their over-emphasis on low-level jobs. In the absence of a structure which promotes economic power for women, what other aspects of these programs can justifiably be described as empowering? This is the issue to which this study is addressed.

Organization of Thesis

The remainder of this thesis is organized in the following way. Chapter two introduces the concept of feminist research and its relation to the qualitative paradigm to which this study attempts to be faithful. Chapter three explains how the data was collected and interpreted. Chapter four addresses one of the central concepts of this study, "power", and examines this concept in the context of feminism as well as the reentry classroom. Reentry programs are described in chapter five along with some of the problems associated with them. Special attention is paid to the Canadian Jobs Strategy initiative and a feminist model of reentry programs is proposed. Chapter six is entitled, "The Women's Stories," and describes the participants' experiences in the program, using their own words. A closer look at some of the basic issues identified by the women forms the basis of chapter seven, and some conclusions with respect to empowerment are drawn. The last word belongs to the participants and the study ends with their thoughts and reflections on the program and this study.

Chapter II

The Feminist Perspective and Qualitative Research

Before embarking on any research enterprise, it is important to articulate the researchers's orientation to the question she or he is attempting to answer (Miles and Huberman, 1984). This preliminary discussion lays the groundwork for all other decisions the researcher will make with respect to specific tools of data collection, data organization and data interpretation. As well, this discussion explicates the role of researcher and researched and their interaction within the research context (Patton, 1980). This research attempts to be faithful to the feminist perspective within a qualitative research paradigm. In this chapter, the role and nature of feminist research in the social sciences will be explained, and it's relevancy to the qualitative approach to this study explored.

The Feminist Perspective

As an introduction to the feminist perspective, an example from the program under investigation in this study demonstrates what a feminist perspective means to the interpretation of certain events. In class during the life skills component, my male colleague and I decided to jointly present an exercise to the women. The exercise involved them writing three statements: "I can't ...", "I have to ...", and "I need..." Students were instructed to write ten endings to those three statements, for example, "I can't swim" or "I have to make dinner every night." Then they were instructed to cross out "can't" and replace it with "choose not to", replace "have to" with "choose to", and "need" with "want." In the ensuing discussion with the women, it became immediately apparent that Peter and I differed drastically on the interpretation of those statements. While my male colleague saw "I can't" statements as largely a question of internal motivation, I saw them as honest assessments, in many examples, of external barriers. If enough of these barriers to decision making are in place for women, then the question of internal motivation becomes largely irrelevant. So the statement "I can't leave my abusive husband", for example, indicated to Peter a lack of understanding about the control one is able to exercise over their lives, whereas I saw it much more as a question of what barriers or support systems were in place to facilitate a woman making such a decision. Perhaps she had been threatened with death if she leaves, or she lives in a rural area and doesn't drive or she is afraid to admit to her parents that she's made a mistake. However much these look like excuses offered to cover up the real issue of motivation to the male colleague, they seem to me to be very real concerns for a woman caught in that situation. Moreover, it makes little difference what we perceive as the reality of the situation; if a woman believes she is being prevented from leaving then she is.

The exercise revealed many things but what was particularly interesting was the different interpretations Peter I brought to the task. How could we account for those differences? The answer seemed to have something to do with gender but also with the different perspective on adult learning that Peter and I brought to this task. Peter's understanding of the women's responses suggested that change is very much a matter of personal choice and that if one resists making choices that the resulting consequences are to be borne by the actor in the situation. Peter also seemed to be saying that he believed people were always capable of making such a choice and as well, of being capable of change, irrespective of environmental conditions. I understand the world, and the notion of choice somewhat differently. While I would want to leave room for one to discover choices, I see external barriers for women as a very real hinderance to choice in many cases and the role of the adult educator thus becomes one of illuminator, helping women to discover and articulate options. Much of my time in this particular program was taken to try and persuade Peter of the viability of my view as a women in informing his understanding of the women's experiences during the program. Feminist research involves much of the same type of persuasive activity; it asks the research community to accept and value the understanding women researchers can bring to the experience of women.

It is necessary, first of all, to situate the discussion in the social and political context of social science research. This will involve examining some of the ways in which much of social science research has been androcentric in its approach and the response of feminist research to this perspective. Two ideas of are special interest to this discussion, one being the notion of choice and the other being the idea of value neutral science. The charge of bias often accompanies the discussion of scientific values and accounts for much of the resistance to not only feminist research but other types of research loosely grouped under the heading qualitative. Before proceeding, however, it is worth noting that feminist research does not align itself on either side of the qualitative, quantitative continuum. Rather it is a research paradigm which can and does embrace a wide range of research methodologies. It is not so much concerned with the relative merits of statistics versus transcripts but the way in which both are approached (Stanley and Wise, 1983).

To claim to be doing feminist research is to lay claim to a certain understanding of the way in which our world is structured for women and then to reject those structures and their attendant influence on social science research. Feminists (and there is no attempt here to distinguish among the many schools of feminism) recognize that "...our formal institutions of society are male dominated and male oriented (Malmo, 1983, p.25)." This allows the perpetration of a dominant ideology which assigns to women a "secondary status in relation to men," and then sustains that ideology through the maintenance of those formal institutions. Further, women have been assigned this secondary status on the basis of gender (Malmo, 1983).

Miller's work in feminist psychology furthers our understanding of the ramifications of such assumptions:

> A dominant group, inevitably, has the greater influence in determining a culture's overall outlook- its philosophy,morality, social theory and even its science. The dominant group, thus, legitimizes the unequal relationship and incorporates it into society's guiding concepts... (Miller, in Roberts, 1981, p.41).

Feminism rejects this explanation of the structures of society which is legitimized by gender but has been seen as natural, pre-ordained, or "the way things ought to be." In its simplest terms, "feminism is a reaction against sexism (Malmo, 1983, p.25)."

Scientific research, whether in the natural or social sciences has historically reflected this androcentric or sexist bias in many ways:

> ...language is sexist, concepts are sexist in their origin and meaning, research is androcentric in so far as women are ignored or viewed from a male perspective, research methodology and instruments are biased against women, and interpretation of research results reflects sexist attitudes (Malmo, 1983, p. 29).

An illustration of the above might be Kohlberg's theory of moral development (Kohlberg, 1969, 1973) which was based on a research sample of males only but whose resulting theory was generalized to both females and males. Kohlberg was left to draw the conclusion that women never achieved the stages of moral development that men do (Malmo, 1983). At the heart of feminist research is the goal of exposing such androcentric bias as witnessed above and to insist, without apology, on the inclusion of women's experience as capable of generating valuable theory and knowledge in and of itself.

Feminist research and other types of qualitative research are often talked about in the same breath and in fact, much of the criticism of feminist research has to do with the question, "What makes it any different from naturalistic (or humanistic or hermeneutic) research?" This question reveals a confounding of the concepts of methodology and paradigms which actually address the research process on two different levels. However, feminist research is not exclusively about the tools of research (although this is an important consideration), but about the rejection of types of research which have an implicit or explicit bias against the experience of women. Much of the language, though, used to talk about qualitative research has a decidedly "gendered" character. Opposing pairs of terms such as hard versus soft data, subjective versus objective, the observable versus the intuitive, can be lined up on either side of the masculine, feminine attribute dichotomy. We value those attributes associated with masculinity in our culture so that research which seems "feminine" in its approach has had to struggle that much harder for a foothold in the research world (Malmo, 1983; Roberts, 1981; Reinharz, 1983). While the feminine nature of qualitative research can explain some of the resistance to it, many of the charges laid against qualitative research in general and feminist research specifically, have to do with researcher bias and the argument that research can and should be value-neutral. In close relation to this are the attendant concerns with respect to validity and reliability (the hallmarks of sound quantitative research). If we abandon our neutral position in relation to our subjects and data, how can we then expect to obtain results which are more than just one researcher's opinion? Without the time honoured research guidelines which keep researchers ever mindful of the dangers of becoming subjectively involved with the data, we are left with nothing to guard against "sloppy" research. So deep is this concern that one author has been prompted to "chide" educational researchers on "How to Look Like an Anthropologist Without Really Being One" (Wolcott, in Owens, 1982, p.1). Wolcott expresses the common fear that once researchers embark upon the murky waters of feelings, emotions, and opinions, there will be no research compass to guide them home.

Thomas Kuhn's work "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" (1968), addressed fears like the one expressed above by arguing for an alternative view of the process of science making. Although Kuhn was not speaking to educational researchers directly, his philosophical and scientific contributions to the debate over what constitutes truth in science has had enormous impact in every area of scientific research. Kuhn argued that scientific paradigms serve the interests and needs of the scientific community they serve. Even in the natural sciences, the body of research thought to be relatively immune to questions of relativism, decisions had to be made with respect to the scientific problems that the community wished to solve. The emerging paradigm seemed adequate only so long as it solved the problems it was meant to. However, anomalies eventually developed and accrued, precipitating a crisis in the community and the search for a new paradigm. Thus, new theories were rejected or accepted, choices made, new communities formed and alternative paradigms constructed. The process described by Kuhn involves the intrusion, on many levels, of the communities' subjective understanding of their scientific needs and the relative merits of competing paradigms. In other words, the process was anything but value neutral or objective.

Even in light of Kuhnian scepticism over the idea of value neutral science, the idea still persists that there is one shared truth and once we conquer the means of getting to it, science will have achieved its ultimate research aim. What is interesting to note about this view, as one author does, is that it assumes a fact-value distinction which is ultimately indefensible on the grounds that if "knowledge is presumptive, there can be no ultimate justification for beliefs of any kind, including basic scientific ones (Howe, 1985, p.11)." However, the idea of value-laden and thus contaminated research has special relevance for feminist researchers because their work is introspective, reflective, intuitive and depends on the subjective starting point of women as authors of their own stories (DuBois, 1983; Malmo, 1983). This is what Roberts refers to as "reflexive sociology" or the approach of taking the researcher's experience into account and accepting those experiences as informing her work. Men, in fact, do this all the time as is evidenced by the considerable body of social science theory which has arisen from "men-only" studies but this approach seems somehow perverse or incomplete when the researched community is women (Roberts, 1981). To see yourself (the researcher), as part of the research context is not, however, a very startling development for qualitative researchers who readily accept that perspective and see it as necessary in order to avoid misrepresentation of the data (Eisner, 1981). In this way, feminist research does intersect with other types of research so we need to examine other levels of understanding to see what sets it apart.

As we noted above with respect to Kuhn's work, scientists accept or reject theories, strategies, etc. based on choice and the choices they make are always, at least partly, subjective. We choose this or that because of the value we place on attributes or qualities that set this or that apart even when two theories may seek to explain the same phenomenon. An example in education might be the choice teachers make between the whole language or phonics approach to teach reading. Even though both methods are designed to achieve the same ends, many attributes of each method set the two apart in such a way that most educators prefer one to the exclusion of the other. The act of making a choice, based on our beliefs about the merits of each method, makes it impossible for us to say we have made an objective decision.

Likewise, it is important to recognize that at the time of selection of a research problem, we have already ruined any chance at complete objectivity because we have chosen to ask a question that reflects out attitudes and beliefs about the nature of our world. As Dubois puts it (1983):

> If the starting point of science making is the posing of a meaningful problem or question, then what is scientific in method is to address that question in the manner and terms most consonant with its substance, and most likely to lead to relevant answers (p. 104).

In feminist research women's concerns are the focus of our inquiry and inspire both our questions and our methods of discovery (Klein, 1983).

If we accept the notion of subjective choice which influences every level of our research project, we can examine the notion of bias more closely. As Becker points out (in Roberts, 1981), "bias is not merely a problem of technical difficulties to be overcome by stricter and more rigorous methods of research (p. 15)", but must be addressed at other levels. If our concern with bias was only a concern with replicability (which is also one of the standards by which quantitative research is judged), then refining our methods to conform to that standard does nothing to guard against androcentric bias but produces a more narrowly defined and easily replicated study. This is also to suggest that replicability be valued over other research concerns (Oakley, 1981). Nonetheless, research bias proves to be one of the more problematic concerns addressed by critics of both qualitative and feminist research and since we are ultimately addressing the question of credibility, it is an important concern.

Feminists approach the question of bias from several directions. One is to reiterate the claim that much of social science research is biased by virtue of its concentration on "male as norm" for generation of theory. Feminist could supposedly lay claim to the fact that concentrating on women is really not any worse and is simply redressing the imbalance of the past. Yet there are more compelling arguments to make. Many authors believe that "women as norm" might in the end, be a more complete view of the world as male dominance has created a male culture which does not allow for the whole picture. Women as "underdogs" though, are capable of a more complete and less distorted view - a view from the "bottom", so to speak, because "less is assumed and more is examined (Thielle, 1986, p. 41)." Rather than committing the same sins of omission we can look at this as a "turn of the spiral, not the flip of a coin." (Thielle, p. 41) Further, feminist researchers make no protestations to the comment that their work is equally as biased but on the contrary, see bias as approachable on a different level, the level of ideological conflict. "By creating a dialectic at the ideological level, it creates the conditions in which a non-sexist methodology might be approached or at least imagined" (Roberts, 1981, p.15). Bias, then, for the feminist researcher is a different matter than that which determines the replicability or generalizability of research results. Bias is more importantly a function of credibility and the levels on which the credibility of social science research can be challenged. Feminists challenge it on the level of sexist idealogy and the resulting implications for research.

The goals of feminist research also distinguishes it from other research because, by definition, they are political. The "best" feminist research is that research which bridges theory and practice and works for the improvement of the researched community (DeSeve, 1985). It raises the consciousness of the participants by exposing previously unchallenged structures, and by contributing to the body of feminist knowledge, which helps to explicate the reasons for women's oppression. Feminist research can also operate on a very practical level by offering advice on how to change policies or implement practices. There are as many different research goals as their are feminist researchers but feminist research is almost always concerned with the empowerment of women in one sense or another.

Other research paradigms are also concerned with this end, most notably humanistic research, but humanists, by definition, cannot recognize gender as any kind of essential factor in their research while feminists recognize that we cannot talk about human experience without taking gender into account. The humanist has no mandate to guard against the influence of a male perspective because to do so would be contrary to how the humanist views the world. You cannot safeguard against what you do not see as being there. The humanist goal, to see the world as populated by people and not males and females, is laudable but ultimately blinding.

The approach and purpose of feminist research is predicated on the observations that despite our efforts, circumstances for women are not improving at the rate we had hoped (Warren, 1987). Based on some rather dismal statistics with respect to women's participation in our society (economically and educationally), Warren (1987) was prompted to ask, "Why cannot our current theories, research tools, and methodologies uncover the educational and learning needs of women (p.126)?" Perhaps a partial response is that we have been looking for the answers in the wrong ways and through somebody else's eyes:

> A question science poses, though it strives toward an unknown must always refer to, be based in the known. When distorted conceptions of reality are the ground of science, the distorted perceptions of reality will be the fruits of science. The androcentric perspective of social science has rendered

> women not only unknown but unknowable... (Dubois, 1983, p.107).

We need to begin the process of uncovering meaning for women by considering the feminist perspective and by doing so, we may be better able to provide answers to Warren's question. We may also be able to help the woman who writes "I can't cut my hair" reach a new understanding of the forces that influence those choices.

Summary

The feminist perspective has grown in response to androcentric bias in social science research. This bias can intrude at any stage of research from the decision regarding what is worthy of investigation through to decisions with respect to publication. Feminist research is not the same as qualitative research but they are often treated as synonymous because of some perceived similarities between the methodologies. This also leads some to criticize feminist research on the same grounds that qualitative research has been criticized, most notably researcher bias. Feminists reject the claim that research can be value-free and see the issue as having more to do with ideology than methodology.

Much of the social science research has been done using men as subjects and then extrapolating results to describe both male and female populations. Feminist research, first and foremost, is concerned with telling the other half of the story - the women's half. It is political in nature and aims to illuminate sexist and oppressive structures in society. By doing so, it hopes to point the way to conditions where gender is not a criteria or barrier to full and equal societal participation.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research recognizes that human behaviour maintains a transactional relationship with the context in which it occurs, and attempts to separate various elements of this transaction allows a distortion of the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon under study (Owens, 1982). Those who claim to be doing qualitative research generally seek to understand reality "as those under study see it (Owens, p.7)," and believe that "human behaviour can only be understood in reference to the perceptual field of the behaving person (Allender, 1986, p.184)." While there are important differences among qualitative researchers, they all stress the need for contextually rich research as the important ingredient to understanding human behaviour. As such, they support the feminist perspective in seeking to understand the world as women see it from their position in a patriarchal society.

The questions of validity and reliability are of special import to qualitative research because the interactive and evolving nature of this type of research cannot be taken as grounds for dismissing researcher accountability (Owens, 1982; Miles and Huberman, 1984). There are several ways to enhance credibility of qualitative work and these will be treated in detail later. However, it is important to reiterate here that qualitative research cannot be judged by the same criteria as quantitative research because the methods and aims of each are different. Qualitative research seeks to explain rather than predict (Eisner, 1981) but the fruits of quantitative research are the application of the results to larger populations. Qualitative research is much more concerned with credibility: given the same context and data, other researchers should arrive at similar meanings (Miles and Huberman, 1984).

Because qualitative research often concentrates on understanding the world through the eyes of the spectator, the tools of obtaining this vision are approached in a way which is consistent with this research philosophy. The approach to interviewing, for example, has evolved in some researcher's eyes from an exercise of controlled interaction to a mutual exchange of information between researcher and researched. Interviewing is one of the main tools of data collection in this study and as such, warrants a closer look.

Interviewing

One of the challenges of interviewing is to get at meaningful data. All researchers hope that the questions asked actually facilitate the respondent's revealing clues as to how they are constructing meaning (Chapman, 1986). However, much of the writing on how to conduct proper interviewing has evolved from a more traditional approach and as such, includes limitations on the nature of the interviewing relationship and well as what counts as meaningful data. Generally speaking, the interviewer should be detached and professional without this detachment standing in the way of developing "rapport" (Oakley, 1981). The interviewee is basically a passive source of information whose own quest for knowledge or understanding must be skilfully circumvented by the interviewer (Oakley, 1981). This need for establishing rapport on the one hand but keeping your distance on the other leads, in many cases, to no-win situations for both participants. As Weber (1986) describes it, an interview is essentially an "invitation to conversation," and in order for that conversation to be fruitful, the respondent must view herself as more than a means to the researchers' selfish ends. "If the interview is to be more than a game of concealment, the interviewer must seek to explicate the knowledge between researcher and participant so that it becomes a communicative situation of understanding and experience." (p.68)

This suggests that the interviewer must recognize notions of trust and responsibility as embedded in the definition of the situation and to allow these notions to inform the researcher's approach to the interviewee and her experience. It also involves pushing aside notions of distance and objectivity as the researcher recognizes that he or she is the "major instrument of investigation (Eisner, 1981, p.8)." This allows the data to be collected in such a way that the subtle nuances of communication are accounted for and form part of the data collection. Moreover, this study is concerned as much with the context as with the content, and the researcher is part of that context. "What and how one says something depends on whom the message is intended for (Eisner, p.8)." To deny the impact the researcher has on the form and content of the interview is to seriously compromise the entire project.

The influence the researcher had on the interviewing context in this research resulted in both positive and negative outcomes, including some of which the researcher was probably not aware of. The participants have known me in the capacity of life skills trainer long before they were asked to view me as a researcher, and throughout the program, they were encouraged to view me as someone they could trust with their most private concerns. In fact, the program success was seen, in part, as dependent on the women viewing at least one staff member as their confidante and friend over a long period of time. In this way, we felt that there was a better chance of keeping attuned to the problems and concerns which might jeopardize the women's success in the program. In view of this personal role, it would have been extremely difficult to present myself as the detached researcher. Knowing the study participants personally was positive in the sense that rapport was easily established and an attitude of trust built into the interviewing sessions. On the other hand, it was very difficult not to show sympathy while a woman related tales of sexual abuse, remain neutral during revelations of some of the students' activities or refrain from offering encouragement with respect to future ambitions. How much this involvement coloured the participants' responses is impossible to estimate, but recognizing the pitfalls of being both the researcher and the researched allows the researcher to build some safeguards into the methodology; one of which is ensuring that triangulation is a primary concern. In any event, if the primary goal of interviewing is to obtain meaningful data, having the opportunity to build a relationship, over a long period of time with the participants, can be carefully viewed as an advantage.

Summary

Qualitative research attempts to explore and illustrate the world as those under study see it.

Researchers utilizing this paradigm believe that the context in which the study occurs is as influential in determining outcomes as is the interaction of people within that context. Further, the researcher does not stand apart from the phenomena under investigation but is also a part of the many forces that shape reality for the participants. This understanding of the research context shapes all the researchers decision with respect to methods of data collection, data interpretation and the way in which the results are written up. Most importantly, qualitative research seeks to explain, rather than predict although the conclusion the researchers draw should make significant contributions to one's understanding of the phenomena.

Interviewing is a special case for the qualitative researcher because traditional readings on this subject place a great deal of emphasis in the non-involved stance of the researcher. This is often very difficult to do in qualitative research as the researcher can become quite engrossed in the research context. This is true of this study where the researcher was involved with the participants over a long period of time as a trainer and friend and continued this involvement in the new role as researcher. The result of such involvement has, undoubtedly, influenced the outcome of this study but perhaps in ways that are not necessarily deleterious. While objectivity and neutrality have been sacrificed to some extent, the interviewing was conducted in an atmosphere of rapport, trust, and honesty on the part of the researcher and the participants.

Chapter III

Methodology

Choosing the Sample. The intent of this study was to investigate the experiences of participants in a particular job reentry program. In order to carry out this task, it was decided that focusing on the experiences of a small group of women in an in-depth manner would be preferable to an attempt to account for the experience of a large number of women. Thus, the participants in this study were chosen from a group of twenty-four women who participated in a job reentry program for women from October 1989 to April 1990 and an attempt was made to choose participants that would be representative of the group. In order to qualify for participation in this particular job re-entry program, the following five criteria had to be met:

1) The participant had to be a female over the age of 18.

2) The participant had to be eligible to work in Canada.

3) The participant had to be a social assistance recipient (SAR).

4) The participant had to have been unemployed or working part-time twenty-five hours or less a week.

> 5) The participant had to have experienced difficulty in making a successful transition into the labour force due to a lack of training and/or work experience.

The above criteria describe the group of women who qualified for participation in this particular CJS project. Four women were chosen from this original group of 24 to participate in this study.

Two dimensions were considered in choosing the sample:

> 1) specific problems or barriers identified by the women and present at the program's outset
>
> 2) demographic data such as age, number of children, marital status, employment status, etc.

An attempt was made, within the sample, to include women who would represent as wide a range of experience and individual differences as possible in order to lend breadth and depth to the data. Each participant faced unique barriers in terms of age, education, family responsibilities and health. After reviewing profiles of other program participants along the same dimensions, it is reasonable to assert that this sample was representative of the group of job reentry participant for this program.

Protection of the Participants

The four women selected for this study were approached with a letter asking for their cooperation in the research project and requesting permission to have access to any written records on file. The letter also asked permission to utilize their daily journals as part of the data collection. This letter guaranteed their complete confidentiality by adhering to the following guidelines:

1) the use of pseudonyms for names

2) exclusion of any data pertaining to addresses, place of birth, other family member names, training place hosts, location of the program, employer names and addresses or social workers' names.

The contents of the letter were carefully explained to all the women and they had the opportunity to make a choice about participation. Special attention was paid to the issues of confidentiality and especially voluntary participation.

Data Sources

The data used in this research was collected from four sources:

1. interviews - individual and group
2. daily logs kept by the participants
3. formative evaluation records
4. summative evaluation records

Interviews. The first primary source of data was the interview and during the data collection stage, two interviews were conducted. One interview focused on each individual woman and the second interview was conducted as a focus group interview with all four women participating. As well, a woman who had been a guest speaker during the program acted as a participant-observer during the group interview. The women were informed, in advance, that she would be participating. Both interview utilized the interview guide approach (Patton, 1980). This approach falls between the completely unstructured approach to interviewing and the structured interview schedule by identifying topics to pursue while allowing exploration within those topics. The general interview guide approach was chosen in order to provide some focus to the initial interview and because it is also particularly useful for group interviewing (Patton, 1980). As each individual was interviewed twice, directing the initial interview to specific topics allowed these topics to be followed up in the group interview, thus providing consistency over the two instances of data collection. The research was specifically interested in the participants' reflections on their movement on a dependent-empowerment continuum, and a semi structured approach made this focus possible while being flexible enough to allow a spontaneous and conversational style (Patton, 1980).

The first interview was further structured by the use of a visual prop, constructed by the participants during the first week of the program. Each class member was asked to visually represent her past, present, and future with pictures and words from periodicals. These posters were used to elicit information about the respondents' history before coming to class, their perception of their lives at present and what their goals, dreams and ambitions were for the future. This visual representation assisted me in guiding the respondents through the changes that had occurred over the past seven months in their lives, and what part the program has played in those changes.

An important aspect of qualitative data is that it does not lend itself to pre-determined categories of analysis and interpretation (Patton, 1980). The researcher is seeking to understand the world as the respondents see it and to do so, she or he must be content to let categories of meaning emerge during the actual stage of data collection. Therefore it would have been counter-productive to attempt to construct an interview guide which tried to anticipate, specifically, what topics would emerge from the interviews. The general interview guide approach allowed for the necessary flexibility in this respect.

The second interview was conducted in a group and extended themes and topics introduced in the first individual interviews. The interview guide for the second interview was a product of the data from the first interview. Doing the second interview in a group had two main advantages. The group used each other as memory jogs and enriched group descriptions by their own experiences and memories. The group also served as "secondary interviewers," probing answers and asking for clarification of each other. In this way, the interaction of the group enhanced the data both qualitatively, by their input and quantitatively, by their elaboration.

Daily Logs. All four women in this sample wrote in personal journals throughout the program. All of the journals were kept regularly throughout the first three weeks of the class and sporadically thereafter with the exception of one week during March. The instructions to the women were completely open-ended and asked them only to record events, feelings, opinions or perceptions which seemed worth preserving. The entries were then responded to in writing by the lifeskills trainer. Journal entries were not restricted to program activities.

Other sources of data collection - The following sources of data supplemented the interviews and daily journals and provided the "thick description" which is essential to qualitative methodology for reasons of both reliability and credibility.

Formative Evaluations. The participants were asked to complete several evaluation forms during the program on the various program components including the trainers, NAIT, course content and course delivery. As well, participant evaluations were conducted twice by their TPH supervisor in conjunction with program staff. The program set aside three days in which to conduct "one-to-one" feedback sessions between the trainers and each individual program participant. During these sessions, the women received feedback on their development in the program and any problems or concerns were discussed.

Summative Evaluations. At the end of the program, the participants were asked to evaluate the program in its entirety including their experience at their TPH.

The interview, diaries, and these evaluation forms were the main sources of data. Other sources of information were utilized and these will be identified in the next section.

Treatment of the Data

Miles (in Lincoln and Guba, 1985) has described qualitative data as an "attractive nuisance:"

> "Qualitative data tends to overload the researcher badly at almost every point: the sheer range of phenomena to be observed, the recorded volume of the notes, the time required for write-up, coding, and analysis can all be come overwhelming. But the most serious and central difficulty in the use of qualitative data is that methods of analysis are not well formulated (p.354)."

Many authors have written of the difficulties described by Miles in the above paragraph and some have proposed distinct guidelines and techniques for organizing qualitative data, making it more manageable for the researcher (Miles and Huberman, 1984). It is important to note, however, that qualitative methodology suggests that data processing is a continuous, developmental and dialectic process.

The first step in treatment of the data is to ensure that the interview transcripts and all other data is complete for each participant (Patton, 1980). Because the data seemed to naturally fall into two categories, verbal and written reflections, a decision was made to treat these separately at first and then to cross reference the interpretation of each. This allowed the researcher to discover both common and divergent themes. In addition, the interviews were conducted retrospectively while written observations took place over the entire course of the program. Looking at each group of observations separately pointed to inconsistencies among the observations that could well be attributed to the lag time between the program's end and the stage of data collection. While nothing could be done to reconcile the variance between these two sub-groups of observations, it did illuminate some interesting differences in the perspectives and was an important enough aspect of the data to warrant clarification in the writing up of the results.

The interviews were treated initially in a manner consistent with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) method of data interpretation. The transcripts were explored and emerging categories were noted. At the end of this process, a decision was made to order the data in a three dimensional model using relationships, time, and dependence and independence as the axis descriptors. However, this model soon proved inadequate as more and more themes emerged which could not be handled by these descriptors, and the risk of manipulating the data to fit the model rather than the reverse, became a very real danger.

At that point, the entire approach to data interpretation had to be re-thought. Keeping in mind the necessity of being able to cross-reference the two data sub-groups, the researcher decided on a new approach which would visually represent the data in a way that clearly showed the interdependence of the themes.

This new approach, commonly referred to as cognitive mapping, begins with a nucleus of words or phrases which summarize the experience in which the researcher is interested. This nucleus then, is the springboard for the researcher's organization of evolving themes. The use of arrows and lines represent connections, inter-relationships and anomalies that develop amongst the bits of data represented on the map. Two maps were drawn to organize the first individual interviews and the corresponding written data for each participant. The nucleus of the map included the phrase "job re-entry," and both similar and divergent themes are discussed in Chapter Seven - "The Women's Stories."

Cognitive mapping was utilized to organize the data from the group interview as well, with "empowerment and reentry" forming the map's nucleus. This map was cross-checked with the written and verbal observations of a participant-observer involved in the interview. Data from the group interview is presented in depth in Chapter Eight - "Empowering the Reentry Woman." It is important to note that even though the data was treated as discrete sub-groups in the beginning, the research context was taken in its entirety and all data was cross-referenced in order to avoid misrepresentation of the results. Where the data displayed divergent themes that could not be readily accounted for, this was noted and included in the two chapters dealing with data interpretation.

The final step in this process was to return to the research participants and ask them to respond to the researcher's conclusions. Their unedited reaction is included in the last chapter of this study - "The Final Word." Kathy's response was a special case because of her relatively low literacy level. (grade equivalent: 8.8). In order to save her the potential embarrassment of having difficulty responding to the research, an alternative was proposed and accepted. I read and explained the research to Kathy and she responded verbally. Her responses were recorded and transcribed for the Final Word (see page 198).

Establishing Credibility

Because the results of this study are not intended to be used to speak for entire populations, the strength of the research must be found in the integrity of its explanations of the phenomena under study. Basically, this involves employing various techniques which both enhance the credibility of the research and make it possible for other researchers to have a clear understanding of the route I took when conducting this research. Owens, in his article "Methodological Rigor in Naturalistic Inquiry: Some Issues and Answers" (1982), has outlined six techniques that help ensure the credibility of the research results. Used in conjunction with one another, they also allow the researcher confidence in the methodology and the interpretation of results. This research adheres to these guidelines with the possible exception of data collection over time.

1) Triangulation - This is the use of a variety of data sources pertaining to the same research questions. Themes are cross-checked among the various sources of data to verify their accuracy. Four main sources of data were used including interviews, daily logs, summative evaluations and formative evaluations. The emerging

themes were continually cross-referenced. The experiences of the program coordinator and second principal trainer were also solicited for further verification as were lesson plans and instructor notes.

2) Member checks - Member checks involve the continual corroboration of data with various participants in the research context, especially the women who make up the sample. These women had the opportunity to respond to my conclusions with respect to the data at various stages of data collection. In addition, each of the five study participants had the opportunity to respond to the research by writing an unedited comment to be included as the "final word."

3) Collect referenial material - Collecting referenial material helps to keep the researcher focused on the context by preserving a sense of the activities that took place over time. Photos, flip-chart classroom exercises, lesson plans, and a variety of work sheets have been preserved.

4) Develop thick description - "Synthesizing, integrating and relating observations in such a way as to "take the reader there" (p. 13) is the essence of qualitative research and is accomplished by dedicated attention to all those techniques that

enhance credibility. Any person reading the research should be able to capture, in his or her mind's eye, a sense of what went on in that re-entry program and how the participants felt about that particular period in their lives. This particular point speaks primarily to the skill needed in writing up research results which are able to convey the texture and complexities of the research context.

5) Engage in peer consultation - This technique speaks primarily to the direction and guidance provided by a research committee but also suggests that the researcher utilizes the professional resources of colleagues to test perceptions against their knowledge and experience. Important to this step is the maintenance of both an "investigator's log" and an "audit trail:"

a) Investigator's log - This is a record of all decisions made with respect to the research process. It includes the "hunches, guesses, feelings and perceptions of the investigator (p. 11)," as well as the reasoning behind the decisions made. The log actually forms part of the audit trail.

b) The audit trail - This is the actual research trail which will be left behind and which will make it possible for other investigators to follow me through my research project from defining the problem, through to the last conclusion. The audit trail should include a variety of documents which, when taken together, provide a complete picture of the research project. These documents should include raw field notes, interview guidelines, procedures used to interpret data and so on. The completeness of the audit trail will make it possible for an external auditor to understand the nature and design of the research and to attest to the credibility of the results.

Summary

This research utilized the perspective of four women involved in a reentry program for social assistance recipients. Their participation was strictly voluntary and their anonymity guaranteed. These women were chosen because of their varied circumstances and backgrounds. They varied in age from twenty-six to forty-six, were single or divorced, and all had children of varying ages.

The data for this study was collected from two main sources: interviews and written documents. The interviews were done with each individual one month after the program ended, and a group interview was conducted three months later.

Written material was compiled throughout the program.

The data was treated as two separate but related sub-groups according to the retrospective or continuous nature of the observations. The cognitive mapping approach was used to interpret the data. This approach allowed the researcher to engage in a process of continual cross-referencing. The final step in the process of data interpretation was the response of the participants to the researcher's interpretation and conclusions.

Chapter IV

Women and Power

> "It [power] is a great sloppy gelatinous mess, pitted here and there with agitated insight (Jones, 1964, p. 47)."

It has become quite popular in adult education to speak of "empowering the students," but it is often unclear, perhaps even to the speaker, what that particular activity entails. "Empower," as defined by the Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1986) is "to give authority or legal power to." or "to enable; permit (p. 644)." What such an activity involves pedagogically will depend on the understanding or interpretation of the embedded notion of power. It would seem that empowerment has gone the way of other terms such as "facilitate:" that they are used so often continues to testify to their significance but over-use has rendered their meanings diffuse and opaque. Power has an important place in the consideration of social and political contexts of all kinds, not merely adult education. Power affects relationships from the state to the personal level and, whether consciously or unconsciously, we all make use of power in our daily activities to structure our world according to our needs, desires, beliefs and goals (Johnson, 1978). For this reason, it is important to understand the nature of power, how one gains access to it and its potential uses and abuses.

This question is of particular interest to women who, as a group, have largely been seen and have viewed themselves as relatively powerless. Many writers contend that this is not so. Women, in fact, often have considerable power but they frequently conceptualize it in a different way than men. Moreover, women may use forms of power that are actually meant to convey powerlessness while achieving some desired outcomes. That certain forms of power depend on the appearance of powerlessness may lead a woman who is exercising power within a particular context to believe she is powerless. This may interfere with self-direction defined broadly as the ability to choose how to move within a context or to make a change of context.

On the face of it, many of these women in the reentry program seemed unable or unwilling to see themselves as having even minimal control over the events in their personal lives and more than once, I was approached by a distraught woman who did not understand why things were happening to her. Power, as it relates to the pedagogical notion of empowerment, is ultimately about encouraging people to achieve ends as self-directed and free individuals, and this depends minimally on their felt sense of control.

What is Power?

Discussion of what the concept "power" means and what it entails, cuts across many disciplines and invites no great agreement. Power can be coercive, economic, physical or ideological and its use is seen to have both positive and negative outcomes. In short, power seems to be located everywhere and its influence can be felt in a variety of ways. A common theme which cuts across the various definitions of power, however, seems to be the use of resources which may or may not involve coercive action to effect certain outcomes. This is what makes power a deeply political notion. Smith (in Oakley, 1981) defines power as "the ability to act effectively on persons or things, to take or secure favourable decisions which are not of right allocated to individuals or their roles (p. 311). Howe (1984) sees power as synonymous with control: "power is the control exercised by one person or group over others (p. 145)."

Janeway (1980) talks about power as "the ability to assert one's will in relationship to others (p. 39)." This sense of control is preserved by Wartenburg (1988) who defines "power over" as "the domination of one human being over another (p. 304)." This is different, however, than "power to," which is "...an ability a person has, as one says that a person has the power to accomplish a certain task (p. 304)."

Writers such as Oakley (1981) and Miller (1986) agree with Wartenburg's distinction between "power over" and "power to" and see this as an particularly useful with respect to women's power which has a liberating rather than controlling potential. In Janeway's words, it is the difference between "the limiting power to compel versus the liberating power to act (p. 86)." Miller agrees with this when she suggests that power is "the capacity to implement (p. 116)," but not necessarily at the expense of others. What is important to note about these definitions is that despite some important differences (especially in the re-working of the notion of power in a feminist context) power is defined by relationships and does not appear to be a finite commodity which one can either diminish or acquire in a quantitative sense. Using power is not a self-contained activity. Therefore, two questions need to be addressed: how is power legitimized, and on what basis to people with power derive their authority to act?

In order to address these questions from the standpoint of empowerment, one further distinction seems crucial. "Power to" and "power over" are both positive concepts of power; both suggest resources that can be used or manipulated in order to achieve goals. But a person may have considerable "power to" in the sense of competence or ability but because of circumstances of deprivation or the coercive power of other over her, be deprived of the full power to act. In Two Concepts of Liberty, Berlin (1969) attempts to establish what's necessary to a full notion of positive power by a distinction between negative and positive freedom. The least a person requires for power is negative freedom which is permission or lack of interference. This is somewhat different from Berlin's concept of positive freedom which is having the necessary resources to act. The notion of empowerment in the reentry classroom especially, seems to be making use of the concept of positive freedom for even if a woman has the necessary resources to act, for example, a well paying job, if she is prevented from going to work every day by her responsibilities for child-care, then she cannot be said to be free to act or to exercise her own will. Berlin's definition of negative liberty can be seen in Zellman's (1978) definition of power: political power is that power which determines the actions of a large number of people and defines for them what they can and cannot do (p. 336)." Negative liberty has been (more or less) achieved politically for feminists so their efforts at empowerment are largely concentrated on positive freedom.

Some authors have recognized at least five sources of social power (Johnson, 1978; Merkacher, 1978). Merkacher further claims that powers of a leader always entail corresponding powers in the followers or subordinates. In view of the relational aspect of power, Merkacher see the bases of power as such:

Leadership	Followership/subordinates
Legitimate of position power ←———	Legal power

- this is potential power which is available for use at appropriate times. It is based on the entitlements and obligations of the law and of the various roles and statuses (both achieved and assigned) in our society. These entitlements and obligations are reciprocal- the leader is obligated to meet the followers entitlements, and vice versa.

Coercive power———Collective power

- this involves pressure on one side and resistance on the other. Fear of punishment is balanced by mutual self-protection.

Reward power———Affluence power

- this involves the expectations of rewards from one side to the other.

Expert power———Expert power

- this involves the knowledge and skills required to accomplish work and accumulated through experience and learning. It is often the same on both sides.

Referent/Identity Power———Referent/Identity Power

-this is influence exercised over others because they wish to be identified as part of a commonality or community. It always involves reciprocal dependency or interdependency.

All women do not have access to all of these power sources. Many of these power sources are seen as incompatible with typical women's characters such as legitimate power (other than as mothers), or concrete coercions and reward power although women do make use of personal reward and coercion such as withholding affection (Johnson, 1978). Expert power, in particular, is problematic for some women as it depends directly on access to learning opportunities (Howe, 1984; Merkacher, 1978). Because power is often thought of as a masculine attribute, stereotypical women are supposed to act as if they are not using power when in fact they are. This contributes to the impression of women as "sneaky" and somewhat underhanded in their uses of power, but often other forms of power such as manipulative power are the only recourse open to women (Morgan, 1982; Johnson, 1978). Manipulative power presents the double bind, however, of using power to achieve certain ends but disguising it in such a fashion that others are not aware of it. This both decreases the likelihood of anyone perceiving a woman as having any power while undermining her own confidence in her ability to make use of her own power (Johnson, 1978). This type of power was perfectly illustrated by Scarlett O'Hara, the heroine of Gone With the Wind, a woman widely regarded as dangerous by her female peers but capable of saving plantations with a demure and helpless batting of her eyes. Only Rhett Butler was able to see through Scarlett's act and atypically, he loved her all the more for her power. Two more bases of power received attention in the literature. Oakley (1981) sees power as a question of resource control. The more resources at your disposal, the more likely your ability to have or be able to exercise power (Johnson, 1978). Further, control of resources can be directly linked to the power of knowledge which forms the basis for expert power as well as providing, through education, the primary means to get and secure economic power (Howe, 1984; Wismer, 1988). We cannot understand or control what we cannot name, Janeway says, and one of the greatest powers of all is the power to define and thus to value or know. It is the exercise of knowledge that allows individuals to have some control over their environment.

The establishment of a power base, however, does not ensure the longevity of power use. The authority to hold and use power comes from the ruled. The question of the legitimacy of power is interestingly addressed by Weber (1963) who defines power in this way:

> In general, we understand by "power" the chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action (Weber in Kernohan, 1990, p. 1).

Weber's definition suggests two things: power is exercised in relationships of either communal cooperation or resistance and that power may well involve the use of force to effect desired outcomes. How it is that individuals in a community come to obey rules or enter into "imperative co-ordination (p. 60)," according to Weber, has more to do with than just communal solidarity or the values and ideals of the individual. These are not enough to compel others to obey the powerful: there must also be a belief in the legitimacy of the source of power.

Legitimacy is established by law, tradition, or what Weber (1963) calls charisma; an illusive and somewhat magical quality this is usually reserved for the miracle worker or the very heroic in battle. All three of these conditions; law, tradition and charisma establish the validity of the claim to authority. The most venerable of these, however, and the hardest to interfere with is tradition (a failed miracle or two will usually topple the charismatic leader):

> The oldest and most universally found type of validity of orders is that which is based upon the sacredness of tradition. The psychological blocks to any change of inveterate usage are strengthened by the apprehension of magical detriments. An order which has once become valid is furthermore perpetuated by those manifold interests which arise with respect to the continuation of acquiescence in it existence (p. 25).

Weber's use of the word "magical" is interesting. We are accustomed to the magical powers of fiction but the magic of fantasy and real life are not, in the opinion of Elizabeth Janeway (1980), so very far apart. Magic, in fact, is a tool used by the powerful to maintain the legitimacy Weber refers to:

> Both for the powerful and the weak, then, the linkage between magic and power offers what psychoanalysts call "secondary gains," or the defensive structure...(that) imposes such kind of order on emotional chaos (p. 126).

For the powerful, Janeway contends, a magic "aura" supplies a kind of consent that does not depend on mass validation, while for the weak, magic becomes their "shield against feelings of inferiority and ineffectiveness (p. 126)." This paralyses both parties in a relationship by distancing the ruler from the ruled and allowing both to appeal to divinity when things go wrong.

Magic alone, of course, is not enough to guarantee power. Power is maintained by other means as well, one of the most common being the threat of violence or even of death. And this is as true of personal relationships as it is of terrorist regimes. The threat of violence subdues everyone because it threatens anyone and there is no way to control or even predict the threat. The very randomness of the threat keeps individuals in a state of helplessness because they have lost their confidence in their ability to have control over their environment; power is then reduced to its most negligible form. The threat of punishment is also observable on the personal level and is well illustrated by the phenomenon of wife abuse. When a woman discovers that none of her actions have any effect on the severity or frequency of the beatings, she soon gives up any hope controlling events and becomes paralysed in a state of "learned helplessness," with its attendant feelings of hopelessness, depression and low self-esteem (Boulette and Anderson, 1985). Violence is usually the last resort of a governing order when the ones who hold power feel that power slipping away as the governed "withdraw their consent and support and refuse to collaborate in their own domination (Finn, 1982, p.204)." However, in the absence of control by fear, other factors are at work which keep the powerful in their place and the weak in theirs. The oppressed may still retain certain types of power such as manipulative, but this difference in this type of power when compared to the power of ruling governments, is the almost total absence of belief in its legitimacy as a power base (Morgan, 1982). It is not always true that the subjected class of people adhere to claims of legitimacy - they may be simply "faking it," or subscribing to it from positions of helplessness or weakness and the conviction that there are not acceptable alternatives (Weber, 1963). (Janeway would say that they had lost their power to "imagine" or create alternatives.) However, even if this were true, in the mind of the powerful this is still not enough to undermine the validity to their claim of legitimacy. In addition, bureaucracies, those machines run by the powerful and set up to effect the decision making process of those in power are remarkably resistant to disruption from within or without (Weber, 1963). Every individual who forms part of the bureaucracy and all who stand outside it depend on, in one way or another, the continual smooth functioning of the apparatus (p. 74). What the ruled get in return is stability of sorts, if not unlimited freedom. To many in a powerless position, this seems like a fair exchange. Given then, the considerable forces keeping the powerful where they are, it is difficult to see what, if any, powers the weak or oppressed have. Factors such as magic, fear of reprisal and the sheer massiveness of bureaucracies, alone or in combination, would seem to preclude any challenge to legitimacy. Janeway disagrees, however, and her main thesis of the book, Powers of the Weak (1980), is that the weak do have power, they only have to recognize its forms and bring them to consciousness. It is here that the question of women's power must be addressed.

Summary

Although the term empowerment has suffered somewhat from overuse, the embedded notion of power has a great deal to do with personal and political relationships on all levels. Definitions of power vary considerably depending on the context in which the idea of power is examined. Power is commonly understood, however, to be related to the ability to achieve one's own ends according to one's needs and desires. This may or may not involve coercion and the outcomes of power use can be both positive and negative. Power springs from a variety of sources and depends for legitimacy on the consent of the ruled or powerless. In this sense power is always transactional in nature.

"Womanpower"

> You feminists have forgotten
> something, You don't respect
> the intricacies of the power
> balance. Everything has been
> disturbed now, everything. You
> go into love like a lioness, all
> confidence, no modesty.
>
> Katherine Govier
> Between Men (1982)

Not only have feminists shown disrespect for the power balance, many are totally rejecting it. In its place, feminists are constructing a new sense of power, one that is unique to women and preserves what feminists feel are the special strengths of women. Gender, it appears, is often a prerequisite for holding some types of power such as economic or political, and the female gender operates as a disqualifier (Chesler, 1976; Oakley, 1981). Prevented from participation, for the most part, at higher political levels, women are now asking whether they want a slice of that pie or if it would be simply better to bake a new one. The desire for political power, as it now stands may actually be counter-productive to women's aims. As one writer cautions: "It is important that we do not let our wishes become our chains (Cohen, 1982, p. 247)."

The suffragettes understood political power. Their attempts to secure the vote for all women were originally based on claim to fairness and equality before the law but suffragettes asking for justice failed to capture the imagination of the masses (Zellman, 1978; Hoff-Wilson, 1987). Other tactics were resorted to and ranged from claims that women were only seeking to preserve the Victorian female virtues of modesty and morality to assurances that the female vote would entrench white supremacy in the American South (Zellman, 1978). Some of these tactics were devoid of much principle but the aim remained the same and the vote was granted to North American women in the early part of the twentieth century (with the notable exception of Quebec). However, those who felt the vote would lead to greater political power were quickly disillusioned. (Errington, 1988; Zellman, 1978; Hoff-Wilson, 1987). It was in the women's suffrage movement that women learned important lessons as to what counted as real political power and they also learned much about the potential of shared discontent.

Discontent, brought about by distrust is the first power of the weak that Janeway (1980) addresses. Oakley (1981) agrees with this and adds two conditions of her own which together, form the necessary basis for consciousness raising, the primary political activity of the 1960's women's liberation movement:

> [There must be] widespread discordance between subjective reality and social norm, the opportunity for victim's to compare experience and some kind of feeling for personal or collected efficacy in bringing about the kind of social change that can transform the material or psychological basis of oppression (p. 308).

By subjective reality, Oakley refers to women's understanding of their experience as an oppressed class, and the dissonance between this experience and social norm is caused by the recognition that others around them are faring far better and for apparently no other reason than their different gender.

Howe (1984) points out that these consciousness raising groups on the face of it, did not achieve much but in fact, they achieved a great deal by the recognition of group members that many experiences were shared. Through this sharing women found solutions, support, and sometimes the means for change. It was a political community that through discontent and the sharing of that discontent, found itself capable of questioning the power structures that it had so long legitimized (Janeway, 1980; Oakley, 1981; Howe, 1984). "Sisterhood," as the saying went, "is powerful."

Women psychoanalysts and psychologists such as Gilligan (1982) and Miller (1986) see this coming together as a natural outgrowth of women's tendencies to maintain their connections with others. Independence, Miller says, is an extremely scary concept for women who have to build their lives on nurturing valued affiliations with other, particularly family members. Much energy has been expended on the maintenance of these affiliations and in their preoccupation with this task, women sometimes lose sight of their own identities. Independence often means to women that they will have to give up these affiliations in order to stand on their own (much has men have had to do in the normally prescribed route of their early socialization as they disengage from their mothers and attempt to emulate the independence and autonomy of their fathers.)(Chodorow, 1974). These affiliations are what guides a woman's moral decision, according to Gilligan, and Miller sees the recognition of the importance of these connections and the willingness to devote time and energy to their maintenance as essential for social advancement. However, Miller points out that as much as this sense of community is described as a fundamental strength, it is still an "inevitable source of many of women's current problems (p.89)."

Affiliations begin in the family, the most important one being the affiliation between mother and child. Children experience, through this affiliation, the experience of both separateness and connectedness. A two year old's "no," the treasured stuffed doll, the dog-eared book, are all symbolic of a child's experimenting with power: to act out her or his will, to own a possession or to predict events (Janeway, 1980). This is the grounding of power for Janeway and her reason for believing that as we all experience power initially in this way, it can never be divorced from the contexts of relationships. This initial relationship, the child and the mother, is where many feminists are locating the special power of women: the power of transformation (Wartenburg, 1988).

The experience of mothering is a logical place to investigate the possibilities of women's special powers because mothering is unique to the female sex. This has been, however, a double edged sword: "Women's dominant role in the reproduction of the species is the source of both their power and powerlessness (Archilles, 1988, p. 291)." It is a source of power, Smith (1986) argues, because it includes the "strengths of interdependency, building up resources and giving...which characterize the mature feminine style (p.116)." It is also a source of women's weakness however, as authority in the family is essentially a private authority and as long as caring for children remains private activity, it will be difficult to translate that authority to other contexts (Wartenburg, 1988). Child raising as a source of both powerlessness and power is aptly demonstrated by a student who told me, "I thought there was nothing for me after my kids left. I thought I'd just shrivel up and die." How then is it possible to avoid idealizing motherhood while celebrating the powers inherent in that role?

It is important to understand what is meant by maternal power because it extends beyond the power to satisfy the needs of a dependent individual. Wartenburg (1988) in examining Ruddick's sense of the "maternal mode of being" claims that: "the capacities of motherhood, especially "care" give rise to a specific way of being human, one that realizes the potential of the species in a positive way (p. 307)." However, because motherhood is defined, to a great extent, by the masculine context of power, women have yet to learn the full potential of this role (Wartenburg, 1988).

The powers of mothering are also supported by Cohen (1982) who goes so far as to claim that women actually do not want political power because it is antithetical to their experience. Women who are in positions of power are there because they have been willing to sacrifice their adherence to values they hold to be fundamental: "Public power means losing what they see as their identity as women and losing that power which they hold in society via the family (p. 235)." The type of power these writers are concerned with can be identified as "transformative" power or power that seeks not to dominate, but is "an agent's use of power to empower another agent, to bring her to a more developed manner of existing (Wartenburg, 1988. p.302)." Power of this nature is very different from dominating power in that it works to "obsolescence rather than enlargement" as in, for example, the growing interdependency of the mother and child which mediates the need for the mother's power over the child's development (Wartenburg, 1988).

This re-definition of power, from the viewpoint of women, is appealing in the sense that it re-values a role that has traditionally been relegated to a subservient position in society (Wartenburg, 1988). The problem with this argument, however, is that it does little to increase women's power in larger and more political contexts. So long as the notion prevails that a women's place is in the home, the governing will be more than happy to allow women authority there. It is important to point out, though, that authority for women does not bring with it even the barest sense of protection from violence or abuse. Until qualities such as those described by the proponents of maternal power are valued by society as a whole, power and authority in the family in exchange for powerlessness in society is a poor bargain.

However, this does not suggest that in the process of empowering women the notion of their power as women should be pushed aside. This would clearly be tossing the baby out with the bath water. The more a woman comes to value what makes her experience unique, the better able she will be to value her skills in other contexts. This is especially true of the re-entry women who come to class convinced that they are completely unskilled. One of the most enlightening discoveries for one of this study's participants was that she had skills that could be utilized in a variety of contexts; all those years of "mothering" had a value of their own. This both increased her sense of personal power and her confidence in her ability to succeed, as a woman, at her place of employment.

Summary

The power of women presents a special case because women have often not thought of themselves as having access to, or use of power. Some believe that women have power of a different nature due to their role as mothers. This is the difference between transformative power ("power to") and controlling power ("power over"). Women use their powers to help individuals become functioning acceptable members of society. While this is a primary strength of women, it is also a source of their weak positions in society relative to men.

Womanpower, deriving from their roles as guardians of the home, is a laudable concept but ultimately shaky ground to stand on as this power rarely translates into political or economic power. Consequently, women still do not have the power to act upon decisions with respect to their own needs and goals. However, mothering continues to be the primary function of many women and does involve a great potential for the development of personal power. For re-entry women, the recognition of all unique strengths attributable to women can only be an advantage as they seek to re-value themselves in the role of mother and employee. It is to this matter of power and the reentry woman that we now turn.

Power and the Reentry Woman

> I guess what empowerment meant to me...the biggest word was independence, an empowerment, I suddenly had these choices. I had this power to make choices that I felt that I didn't have before. I don't know...I guess all along I felt I just expected a lot of things, accepted a lot of things 'cause I was a woman. Like damn, my father did it to me, you might as well do it to me...and...now I have the power to make those choices.
>
> "And where did you get that power, Judy?"
>
> "Well, I got it within myself..."
>
> Participant comments
> Interview #2

Earlier, I posed the question about whether any of this discussion of power is of relevance to the participants in this study. We have examined the various notions of "womanpower" that present an alternative paradigm of power. Can this alternative paradigm be of any use to the re-entry woman? Are their goals expressions of the need for more personal power? That question, to a large extent, will be answered by the research itself. Here it will be useful to examine what we are doing when we say we are "empowering women."

According to Lovett (1988) the welfare state has failed because of massive bureaucracy and the message it churns out:

> People are encouraged to think rich and live poor. To become, in effect, the permanent prisoners of someone else's conception of their happiness (p. 142).

Janeway agrees with Lovett:

> All too often the intended consequence of...good works turns out to be the diminishment of liberty and stature of those who are seen as requiring benevolent help (p. 57).

This is where a sense of "empowering" individuals comes from but it is often a self-serving notion. Rather than using our own perception of what someone's happiness ought to be, we must allow the weak to participate in their own growth; their own acquisition of knowledge. If we do not, they will be unable to establish themselves as separate and developed individuals who can successfully interact with their external reality. Hence, they fail to acquire the power associated with affirmation of themselves as separate, yet connected individuals (Janeway, 1980; Miller, 1986).

For Berlin (1969), the recognition of the individual as an autonomous and free thinking entity is at the heart of personal freedom. It is easy for a bureaucracy or an administration or even a teacher, for that matter to fall into the trap of paternalism, regardless of the laudable intentions behind their actions. And paternalism, says Kant, "is the greatest despotism imaginable (In Berlin, 1969, p. 57)."

Berlin agrees:

> Paternalism is despotic, not because it is more oppressive than naked, brutal, unenlightened tyranny, nor merely because it ignores the transcendental reason embodied in me but because it is an insult to the conception of myself as a human being, determined to make my own life in accordance with my own (not necessarily rational or benevolent) purposes, and above all, entitled to be recognized by others. For if I am not so recognized, then I may fail to recognize, I may doubt, my own claim to be a fully independent human being... (p. 157).

To be able to choose, to effect one's own outcomes, to live one's life as one sees fit, are all basic to personal power but in order to say a choice has been made, there must be options to choose from (Chesler, 1976; Berlin 1969). Often one can seem to choose to comply with what is inevitable, thereby sustaining the illusion of having made any choice at all (Janeway, 1980). This can be seen again, in the experience of the battered wife, who often, quizzically, appears to be choosing to stay with the batterer. By doing so, however, in her own mind, she avoids the shame of defeat by asserting her ability to choose even when in reality it is a non-choice. However, to the extent that one is denied adequate resources, one cannot be said to have the freedom to choose. As Berlin (1969) states it, "What is freedom to those who cannot make use of it (p. 124)?"

Equally dangerous, however, is unlimited choice when an individual forgets that he or she is part of a community of shared resources and strengths. And it is in this sense of community that many believe the road to power for woman lies. Perhaps then, empowerment in the re-entry context is best thought of as a group notion with a gain in power for the group meaning a gain in power for every individual (Campbell, 1989). Empowerment does not, in this sense, depend on independence but is reflected in the coming together of women with shared experiences on which all can draw to gain a sense of their own individual power.

Summary

Empowerment and paternalism are easily confused and it is important to maintain the distinction between these two concepts. Paternalism is the term used to describe the actions of one who feels that he or she is justified in telling others what their happiness should consist of. Empowerment allows the individual to determine his or her own concept of happiness according to specific needs, values, interests and goals. When professionals lose sight of this distinction, they may consciously or unconsciously diminish the liberty and thus, the capacity for individuals to develop their own personal power.

The pursuit of individual freedom, however, can pose a threat to the health of the community to which that individual belongs. Empowerment for reentry women might occupy that middle ground between self-interest and serving the community. Women, by virtue of their stake in maintaining close affiliations with others, are in a good position to develop their power in relation to a community of shared interests. The examination of empowerment within a group may prove a particularly fruitful endeavour for women in light of the structure of reentry programs which, in the main, are delivered to groups of women with perceived similar needs and experiences. The next chapter focuses on reentry programs and their potential for empowerment.

Chapter V

Women and Reentry Programs

The primary objective of reentry programs for women is to facilitate and support a woman's reentry into the labour market or back to school. This is what binds all reentry programs together (McFarland, 1988; Ariano, 1986; Kahn, 1983; Aird; 1980; Wismer, 1988). The actual vehicle for doing so differs for each location and programs depend a great deal for character on clientele, available funding and the philosophies of the program funders and staff. In this chapter, the nature of reentry programs will be examined with respect to the particular problems and issues faced by reentry women. As well, some of the more pressing concerns associated with reentry programs will be examined and a feminist model which addresses some of these concerns proposed. Particular attention will be paid to the Canadian Jobs Strategy (CJS) initiative.

The Reentry Woman

The reentry woman is a woman, who by choice or necessity, seeks to reenter the labour market or to return to school. Typically, she has been out of the work force for an extended period of time or perhaps has worked sporadically over the years, juggling child-raising and employment. The reentry woman can be married, single, divorced or widowed and may or may not have children. Often a precipitating event such as the death of a spouse or divorce propels her back into the labour market (Wismer, 1988; Ariano, 1986; Swift, Jr., Colvin and Mills, 1987), or "she may have made a premature commitment to unrealistic or uninteresting choices as a result of accepting a role identity of wife and mother prior to exploring her own value and needs (Kahn, 1983, p. 127)." Many women find a return to the work force possible or desirable when the children have grown up or entered school, and the role of mother and housewife is no longer economically viable or socially useful: "the housewife moves around a dying world where the skills she has developed become redundant as those she nurtures achieve the independence in which she supports them (Aird, 1980, p. 6)." Although women are motivated to reenter the labour market for a variety of reasons, many of them share some common characteristics and experience some common problems. This is especially true for those women who are unexpectedly faced with reentry and their experiences are the focus of this discussion.

Wismer (1988) says that it is important to understand that the reentry woman is at a different stage in her developmental life than, say, a young woman entering the work force for the first time after high school. As such, reentry women have different learning needs and styles.

These differing developmental stages give rise to what Wismer calls "critical moments" in a woman's learning cycle and for programs to be effective, whatever issues accompany these moments must be addressed. For the reentry woman what has often been the most dramatic change and hence, the most pressing issue at the "moment" of reentry, is the change in her economic status and responsibilities (Wismer, 1988). Women may suddenly find themselves faced with supporting a family and doing so without the necessary tools such as currently valued skills, adequate education, or recent successful labour market experience. This means then, that they will be prepared for only the lowest paying occupations.

Confounding their financial problems, are the reentry women's continued responsibility for children and the home, irrespective of their marital status. Women, research has shown, put 36 hours of work into the home per week, whether they work outside the home or not while men, in the same circumstances, put in an average of 11 home based hours (Watkins, 1988). The cost of this double shift is physical, mental and emotional as a woman struggles to integrate her various roles, some of which continue to be undervalued be society as a whole (Gunderson and Muszynski, 1990). The situation is further complicated by a reentry woman's feelings of guilt about leaving the children or "stealing time: for herself (Hersch, 1980; Nemiroff, 1987). Women are work into the home per week, whether they work outside the home or not while men, in the same circumstances, put in an average of 11 home based hours (Watkins, 1988). The cost of this double shift is physical, mental and emotional as a woman struggles to integrate her various roles, some of which continue to be undervalued be society as a whole (Gunderson and Muszynski, 1990). The situation is further complicated by a reentry woman's feelings of guilt about leaving the children or "stealing time: for herself (Hersch, 1980; Nemiroff, 1987). Women are also often charged with the care of elderly relatives or parents who further tax their physical, emotional and financial resources. The different capacities that women function in develop a variety of skills, some of which are marketable but many that are not. Even if they do have marketable skills, however, reentry women may be lacking the psychological skills to integrate their new role as paid employee with more traditional roles such as housewife (Hersch, 1980; Watkins, 1988). Most debilitating of all for reentry women is a their sense of failure, the root of which they firmly locates in themselves (Wismer, 1988, MacDonald, 1985). They are often isolated by these feelings, convinced that they are to blame for their own misfortunes and equally convinced that others around them are suffering no such lack of personal worth. It is with this internalized sense of inadequacy and self-blame that many reentry women enter into a formal reentry program.

Reentry Program Models

Many program planners and professionals who work with reentry women recognize the problems this group faces and the ways in which the programs are structured generally reflect this understanding. Programs examined for this research all included at least two components: one component related to employment and one which addressed affective issues such as low self-esteem or lack of self confidence (Kahn, 1983; Prichard, 1982; Towns, 1987; Ariano, 1986; McFarland, 1988). Generally, reentry programs recognize the presence of both systemic and attitudinal barriers to successful reentry (Kahn, 1981; McDonald, 1985), and planners attempt, by various means, to address barriers in ways most consonant with the nature of the barrier. Thus, many programs build in funding for bus passes, for example, or clothing allowances to address systemic barriers while others budget for personal and career counselling. What is common to all the programs, however, and what the program planners saw as pivotal to the success of the program, was the use of group support to prevent isolation as well as impress upon the women, the structural nature of many of their employment and personal issues (Ariano, 1981; Swift, Colvin and Mills, 1987; Breault, 1980; Aird, 1986). "From the recognition of a common experience grows a need to shape and direct that experience," one program head commented. "It's only when an acceptance of our power to change our lives is achieved that choices can be made (Aird, 1986, p.7)."

The other major component to reentry programs is the one that speaks to employment issues. There is quite a variety here as different programs targeted different occupations and spent varying amounts of program time devoted to the development of job related skills, job search techniques, and on the job training. For example, one CJS program in Kamloops, British Columbia offered 70% off-site training and 30% on-site training (a reversal of the usual formula) because the coordinator felt that off-site training which included extended self-esteem and confidence building sections, was fundamental to any successful on-site experience (Breault, 1986). A different project in the United

States offers continuous enrolment and intensive counselling and assessment in order to assist participants in choosing their own career paths (Kahn, 1983). A program in Scotland uses academic courses as the starting point for discussion of relevant themes for women as well as group counselling sessions and vocational counselling (Aird, 1980). Some CJS projects in other regions of the country favour a 30% off-site and 70% on-site ratio and include specific skill training at community colleges or technical institutes (Jewish Community Centre (JCC) proposal, 1988). CJS is particularly interested in serving market needs and has, as its focus, job training rather than job creation (Gunderson and Muszynski, 1990), so many CJS reentry programs are funded on the basis of their ability to satisfy particular labour market needs (Wismer, 1988; Gunderson and Muszynski, 1990). The labour market driven philosophy behind the CJS is open to considerable criticism to which we shall now turn.

Criticisms Related to Reentry Programs

The CJS came into being in 1985 and replaced all other federally sponsored programs aimed at training, job creation, and labour market adjustment

(Gunderson and Muszynski, 1990). As previously mentioned, the CJS focuses on training needs of the private sector rather than on job creation Gunderson and Muszynski, 1990; Wismer, 1988; Dance and Witter, 1988). In this way it differs substantially from its predecessors and this difference is the primary source of discontent with the initiative. Gunderson and Muszynski have summarized the CJS philosophy and attendant problems:

> By emphasizing access or opportunities rather than results, it seems to reject the possibility that training or job creation could be used to compensate for systemic differences that make equality of access insufficient for certain groups. By contrast, the thrust of employment equity is that equality of access is insufficient to compensate for the legacy of a cumulative history of discrimination and inequality, much of which may be systemic or hidden (emphasis in original) (p. 145).

It would appear that CJS policy makers are not particularly interested in addressing labour force inequity. Rather, what seems to be of greatest concern is how efficient the total program is in terms of cost. The merits of certain projects are judged by the number of women who are employed at program's end and as such, program planners who are ultimately accountable to CJS project managers are forced to consider short term industry needs rather than long term learning needs of the participants (Wismer, 1988; Dance and Witter, 1988; Gunderson and Muszynski, 1990). A further consequence of this focus on present rather than future training needs is the necessity of targeting occupations characterized by high staff vacancies and turn over such as the hospitality industry. Unfortunately, these are the very occupational niches that already have an over-representation of women, and the fact that these positions are vacated so routinely is testimony to their quality. However, jobs such as these continue to be representative of the type of occupational choice for program planners, constrained as they are by cost conscious evaluators. In 1986, over 87% of trainee positions were in non-high quality areas typified by low wages, little security, high turn-over and dull or repetitive tasks (Dance and Witter, 1988). This self-perpetuating cycle of entry and exit in the labour market amount to, in one trainer's words: "re-arranging deck chairs on the Titanic (Wismer, 1988, p. 17)."

The quality of the training received in these programs is another concern with respect to CJS projects. Funds are granted to those who write the best proposals but proposal writing skills do not, of course, always translate into quality training (Wismer, 1988). Given, especially, the preference for funding private industry training on the part of CJS policy makers, trainers can be totally unaware of important principles related to androgyny[3], the study of adult learning and teaching (Wismer, 1988; Dance and Witter, 1988). While there are many excellent trainers in the field who have probably never heard of androgyny, it is also true that trainers who are inadequately prepared to deal with the special needs of adult learners, let alone reentry women, are that much more likely to deliver inadequate training compared with their more experienced and knowledgeable counterparts (Wismer, 1988). It is important to keep in mind that training in itself does not create jobs other than for the trainers (Wismer, 1988), so even if the training a woman receives is of high quality, without concurrent education about the changing labour market, she will be ill-equipped to cope with the search for employment (Berlove, 1985). In one author's view, CJS programs are failing to meet the requirements of labour markets ten years ago, let alone the market ten years down the road (Wismer, 1988). "Women, in reality, may be training for the unemployment lines (MacDonald, 1985, p. 19)."

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[3] See Knowles, M. The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species.

However inadequate some of the CJS programs can prove to be for the women who enrol in them, many women are still afforded the opportunity to participate. However, this is not true of women who have special educational needs and are unable to find agencies willing to deliver appropriate programs. The second language speakers, the illiterates, the handicapped, these women often fall through the eligibility cracks. The program in this study deliberately recruited three native women (all of whom dropped out) and one woman with multiple sclerosis, but given the CJS's focus on quantity over quality, the program coordinator was understandably reluctant to attempt to serve those special needs groups in the next program. Why, if given the choice, would any program coordinator seek out program participants who are that much less likely to swell the success numbers at the end of the program? Thus, the women who need training and support the most are the least likely to be considered as eligible candidates (Wismer, 1988; Dance and Witter, 1988; MacDonald, 1985).

Summary

Reentry women come from all walks of life and can find their economic circumstances virtually changed overnight. They are propelled into the labour market for a variety of reasons but once faced with the task of reentry, they can and do experience similar problems. Planners of reentry programs recognize the barriers that reentry women face, both systemic and attitudinal, and through the structure of the specific programs, attempt to help women cope with these barriers. All reentry programs examined for this study included both employment and life skills components.

Canada's reentry model, one of the six streams of the CJS, is primarily market driven and as such, is open to wide criticisms regarding its philosophy and effectiveness. The focus on labour markets with on-going employment needs due to poor wages and working conditions do nothing to address, structurally, the problem of women and poverty. The quality of training is also a concern as is the fact that many special needs groups such as illiterate women do not have the same equality of access as other women. This is a consequence, in part, of CJS success criteria which primarily looks at number of people employed at the end of any given program.

Although many of the drawbacks associated with CJS policy must be tackled on political levels, it is possible to be creative with program content while staying within the parameters set out by CJS policy. CJS reentry programs always bring women together which is a potentially empowering basis for social and individual change. In the next section, we will examine how a feminist perspective on reentry programs might use this potentially empowering aspect of bringing women together to form the basis for building a feminist reentry program model.

A Feminist Model of Reentry Programs

There are many dedicated trainers and program coordinators in the field of reentry, and there are also many excellent programs which hold the reentry woman's concerns as central to program development (Wismer, 1988). Helping women to establish a firm belief in their own value and capabilities is the starting point from which all other successes grown or are made possible. That is the main philosophical tenant behind feminist efforts in reentry programs.

The greatest strength of a reentry program, according to the feminist approach is the opportunity to bring women together. The feminists of the 1960's recognized this strength and saw group activity as a necessary vehicle for consciousness-raising. Women's experiences taken in isolation could not generate the kind of understanding needed to enable women to challenge what they perceived as unjust or oppressive. That is why coming together as a group, in the sixties, was seen as so important (Code, 1988). As the group gels and its members begin to talk to one another, women start to see themselves as having worth socially and intellectually by virtue of their positive interaction with others (Hersch, 1980). Further, women's participation in the public world of human interaction and discourse is not always welcomed and thus they often find movement from the private to the public domain an uneasy experience (Kramarae, 1981). For reentry women, finding the courage to speak in groups of women who are in the main, supportive and sympathetic, was an important transitional step between the private and public world. The sharing of common experiences and problems can also be supplemented by some historical understanding of the problems all women face. This helps to alleviate a woman's sense of individual failure and to allow her a vision of a society which is imperfect through no fault of her own (Breault, 1986; Nemiroff, 1987; McFarland, 1988).

As powerful a strategy as group process can be however, women are not, nor do they always want to be, part of a group. Women have individual needs as well, and they should not be overlooked, a danger if trainers become preoccupied with facilitating the group. There are many opportunities during a reentry program to see women individually. For some programs, this is part of an evaluation scheme (JCC proposal, 1988), while for others, one-to-one counselling sessions are a major part of the time spent in the program (Berlove, 1985; Kahn, 1981). Career counselling especially, can be designed to take into account the particular challenges faced by reentry women.

Traditional career services have been built around theories of career development for men and, as a result, these theories are not always appropriate as a basis for counselling women. Rather than focusing on individual change, career counselling for women can also explore the larger possibilities of structural change in the labour market (Kahn, 1983). At the very least, this understanding may help to expand a woman's view of what counts as appropriate career choices. Most importantly, women should be helped to recognize that a women's labour participation is closely tied to her child-raising decisions so women's careers tend to be interrupted (Kahn, 1983). It is necessary in the planning stages, to consider these interruptions and what they will mean in terms of a chosen career path, and to help women understand that wanting to balance a career and family is not the same a being ambivalent towards their roles as paid employees (Berlove, 1985) At the same time they need to be aware that these interruptions are not always favourably received in the labour market: "While marriage and children for a man are seen as assets in motivating him to work harder, for women they tend to be seen as liabilities or distractions (MacDaniel, 1988, p. 110)." Traditional career counselling has also stressed the idea that work is something that happens away from home and that it is separate from family life. This leads women to believe that children are an obstacle to their career goals rather than seeing child raising decisions as part of the process of career planning (Berlove, 1985; Nemiroff, 1987). This is really another case of internalizing systemic barriers, in this case the reluctance of society to disseminate responsibility for child care throughout the population. One author believes that giving women permission to dream helps them to articulate deeply felt personal needs which in turn, becomes a powerful motivating drive (Berlove, 1985). Whether career planning takes place in an individual or group setting, however, there comes a point where women will be asked to evaluate their own skills as an important step in the career planning process.

A common experience for trainers and counsellors is to try and convince women that they have not been "just a housewife," a self-description which reflects the worth society places on such a role. On the labour market this role would involve advertising for a variety of occupations, from chauffeur to nursing assistant, many of which are undervalued because they are seen an a natural extension of the work that women are biologically predestined to do (Chesler, 1976). The many that depend on the variety of roles that women fill, need to begin to value those roles for what they are truly worth, in many cases the very sustainment of human growth and development. However, the idea that women have developed skills in contexts other than paid employment is a very hard sell to the woman who has never taken typing. Reentry women are frequently surprised to discover that they have developed skills in other areas such as their homes and as volunteer workers (Berlove, 1985; Wismer, 1988), and they often begin to see that skills are more than word processing but include abilities and talents that develop in a variety of ways, formally and informally (Berlove, 1985). Perhaps if reentry women were credited in some way for the skills they have developed which are transferable to paid work contexts, they would be less resistant to the notion that being a housewife is no easy task (Wismer, 1988; Berlove, 1985).

For reentry women to begin to engage in any sort of critical reflection with respect to their experiences (Brookfield, 1985), depends first of all, on their entering into a relationship of mutual trust and responsibility with the trainer(s). The reentry classroom must be such that both student and teacher are seen as having something valuable to contribute to the learning process (Hersh, 1980; Belenky, et al, 1986). Reentry women are women of experience and this experience, especially that which extends beyond the classroom walls, must be considered. This is, in fact, one of the basic principles governing adult education (Knowles, 1973). For women, this principle is of special importance and their experience in their homes is often not valued, on the whole, by society.

Women's learning styles are receiving progressively more notice in the research community and also are an important consideration in the reentry classroom. Research has shown that women prefer to learn collaboratively, and the approach which is most successful with them emphasizes self-determination and the blending of initiative with received knowledge or, in other words, listening to both themselves and others (Wismer, 1988; Belenky, et al, 1986). This version of women's learning styles returns to an earlier theme of group support, and the potential women perceive in the group as a source of knowledge.

Reentry programs for women are part of the larger picture of adult education. When Wismer (1988) asked trainers across Canada to describe their vision of what adult education should be:

> They described a "whole" approach to education extending from cradle to grave, and designed to enhance imagination, intuition, social and physical life, and an appreciation of beauty. In such an educational system, skills training is just one small - and important - element (p. 41).

Skill training, without attention to these other aspects of women's education, is unlikely to ever help women develop an understanding of the issues they face, and without this understanding, envisioning a working world where gender plays no part is that much more difficult:

> What is needed is a cradle-to-grave education system for women in which skills training is only one small component of a comprehensive effort to assist each woman to achieve her full potential on her own terms no matter where she lives, what her racial or ethnic background is, or how poor her parents are or were (Wismer, 1988, p. 32).

Summary

While program planners may be somewhat constrained by the objectives and evaluation criteria of the CJS project managers, there is still considerable room for improvement in the reentry program model. A feminist model of reentry programs would start with the basic belief that women have something valuable to contribute to their learning experiences, whether or not they see themselves as only housewives. When women begin to appreciate the relevance of their life experience to everyday situations and contexts, they will begin to revalue themselves as capable, able people. A feminist reentry model also recognizes that a male model of the work world has thus far guided most of the career counselling that women receive. Women do not see, or interact with the work world in the same fashion as men, primarily because of their child-raising responsibilities. Any career counselling for women needs to take that very important distinction into account.

Finally, many women prefer a learning style which is collaborative, not competitive, and draws on the expertise and knowledge of the group. Reentry programs must take into account the special learning needs of women. The next chapter details the stories of the women who participated in this research.

Chapter VI

The Women's Stories

Lois

> I am finding that I have many hidden values and attitudes that I didn't know I possessed. As all of this is opened to me, I realized that I am a real person with good solid values. My self-esteem is still there. Perhaps a little rusty from lack of use, but nonetheless there.
>
> Daily Log, October 16th

Lois is a forty year old divorced mother of three boys. At the time of the study, she was not working for health reasons and she was with one of her sons. At first glance I saw a woman who was calm and mature and seemed to have about her a certain quiet strength; the sort of woman you would be tempted to describe as the "motherly type." A week later, however, Lois shyly approached me to ask me if I thought her perceptions were silly. What did she mean by her perceptions? As it turned out, Lois was referring to her strong religious convictions that had become obvious over the first week. Did I, she asked, think that her faith was silly? I was both surprised and moved by the question. Who was I to judge the merits of anyone's religious affiliations? It was also the first time that I began to have a more prolonged look at Lois. I wondered why she had been prompted to ask me, a woman ten years her junior, such a question and why she would care so much about the answer. That exchange contained an important sub-text: Lois' on-going concern with how she appeared to others and her struggle to find a place for herself in the program. Eventually Lois was to find that place and in the process of doing so, reaffirmed her own sense of personal worth.

Lois was orphaned at an early age and began living with relatives. During these early years, Lois became the victim of sexual abuse at the hands of her uncles. Sexual abuse and child abuse at that time were not spoken about Lois says so "you just put up with it and tried to get out." Get out she did and at fifteen, Lois was living on the streets, making temporary homes with friends and occasionally sleeping on park benches. At eighteen, she became pregnant and in order to marry, she and her future husband moved to Winnipeg where she was of legal age. Lois had been working throughout this time and found a job as a cook at a local restaurant where all the "pimps and pushers hung out." Her marriage and her job provided Lois some security and stability for the first time:

> Well...it was secure at that time because I didn't have to live in different friend's houses or, you know, I slept in different house all the time...I really enjoyed that (her home) because it was mine.
>
> Interview #1

However, things began to go wrong after the birth of her first son when Lois's husband became violent: He got drunk and high and he really beat the tar out of me.

Lois left after this violent incident but similar to her circumstances as a young girl, she felt she had no choice but to return to her husband:

> I was really feeling desperate because I was in a town or a city where I knew nobody. I just moved there and I didn't know a soul and, uh, it was terrible, you know. What can you do? So I had to go back to him. You know, I had no where else to go.
>
> Interview #1

Lois did turn to the Salvation Army for support and thus, her long and important association with that organization began. However, her husband continued to batter her, with the attacks increasing in intensity and frequency during the last few years of their twenty year marriage. During this time as well, Lois discovered she had cancer and her husband's reaction to her diagnosis and treatment precipitated Lois's final decision to leave:

> Up until the last year, the last year was the worst when I went into the hospital and was diagnosed with cancer and he wouldn't go for the chemotherapy with me...and he kicked me in the stomach and said, "I wish you would have died and then I could have collected your insurance policy...and that's when it really sort of hit: this man really doesn't care about me.
> Interview #1

This was not an entirely new realization for Lois:

> I knew it before but it never, I never came to full realization. Like all of the sudden I just realized, whoa, this isn't the man that I want to be with. I don't want to have to live like this and the kids had a lot to do with it because he wouldn't ever talk to them or do anything with them... Interview #1

In view of her own and her children's unhappiness, Lois ended her marriage, stocking a new apartment with groceries and packing up her home while her husband was at work.

Lois remembers her feelings of desperation upon leaving:

> ...so I went to Betty and I just said I can't take it any more. If I don't get out of here I'm going to die and I knew I was going to. Like I really felt that if I didn't leave I would die within the year. And I really felt that deeply, you know like I didn't want to live because there was nothing, nothing to fight for any more...I would let myself die...
> Interview #1

Lois indicated some sense of control over her life by the use of the phrase, "I would let myself die," rather than saying, perhaps, "he would kill me... and although she was frightened of her husband, she was determined to defend herself and her sons: "this is my house. He can't do anything to me." Lois's husband did continue to threaten her for over a year, though, and at the time Lois said her only support was coming from the church and her sister and husband. Lois credits her faith primarily in seeing her through those troubled times. To add to Lois's health and safety concerns, she also found that her husband had cleaned out their joint bank account and disposed of their two vehicles leaving Lois economically bereft and too ill to be able to work. She found herself on social assistance and after a lifetime of work, this was a very bitter experience for Lois: "I just hated it because I've always earned my own money and earned my own way and could do what I want." (Interview #1) Lois found herself in a position of relying on others which she found very difficult for she had always, and still does, consider herself "very independent." The tumultuous year or so before Lois's entry into the program took its toll on her physical and emotional health:

> When a person loses everything material...when a person loses everything emotionally, there is a huge void in her life. I couldn't keep my home or car. I had to go on social assistance. I felt lower than low. My self-esteem was gone.
>
> Daily log - October 19th

The years of abuse had led Lois to believe that she was "worth nothing." She found it difficult to trust anyone and almost impossible to trust men. She became very "inward" and shy and allows only so much intimacy in her life before she "puts up a wall." Lois's close friend in the Salvation Army was the first person Lois let hug her in years:

> ...Like I had really low esteem. Very shy. Very inward. I would never talk to anybody about anything and then when Betty came along it just sort of seemed to change everything. I really found a soul mate, you know? Like someone that I could really trust enough to talk to.
>
> Interview #1

It was with these feelings of mistrust and little self-worth that Lois entered the re-entry program.

It is significant to note at this point that Lois's written observations and her taped interview are very different in from and content. Her daily log especially, is very formal in nature and seem almost guarded as she describes her experiences in class. This is most evident in Lois's observations with respect to the other women in the class. Perhaps in light of the fact that her log was being responded to by myself as the life skills trainer, Lois was cautious to avoid any text that would provoke a negative reaction from me. She seemed to be consistently concerned with looking "silly" to others and said she was afraid she would embarrass herself.

Lois began the program with "anticipation and fear," unsure of her acceptance by the group and not knowing what would be expected of her. She writes of her uncertainty but in the end, speaks positively of the classroom activities and especially the other women who Lois realized "as soon as she sat down were all like me, wanting to re-enter the working world." During the interview, however, Lois confessed to a different perception of the class:

> Lois: I thought it was really, really bogus.
>
> Researcher: Did you?
>
> Lois: Yup. I was sitting there the first day...the first day I was sitting there and, um, I was thinking, Lois, you shouldn't be here.
>
> Researcher: What do you mean by bogus?
>
> Lois: Like I shouldn't be there and I didn't belong.
>
> Researcher: How come?
>
> Lois: I don't know. It just seemed like they were so different from me.
>
> Interview #1

The differences Lois perceived between her and the others were borne out by behaviours such as using bad language which really shocked Lois: "I thought it well, you know, no class." Things began to change for Lois, she claims, after a month or so in the course when she began to "love the class." This is a time, too, when Lois began to get to know the other women and to establish her role in the class. She began to spend much of her time "listening to other people's problems." This was an important aspect of Lois's experience in the class because although it was not until February (the class ended in April) that Lois was comfortable enough to voice something publicly, privately many of the women sought her out for advice or help. As Lois remarks:

> I felt good that they trusted me enough to tell me. But some of them, I felt, were just telling me so they could, um, blow off steam. But a lot of it was, you know, listening to them. They've all got problems and realizing they're all in the same boat that I'm in.
>
> Interview #1

Lois was particularly helpful to those who benefitted from her connection with the Salvation Army and she was able to link them with services such as crises counselling and food hampers.

This helping role was welcomed by Lois and helped her to realize that, "I was a valuable person, you know. That's one thing this course really did for me was make me realize that I was a valuable person." At the same time, Lois writes about the camaraderie in the class and the support she received at difficult times:

> Today was a particularly difficult day. I came to class very nervous and disturbed after a really horrible devastating night. However, I was much pleased with the support the class showed. There is a common goal that we all share and the interaction amongst us is really great!
>
> Daily log - October 26th

Lois continued to worry, though, about her image. She was extremely self-conscious and hoped that at one point, "the people will be patient with me." After a one-to-one feedback session I conducted with Lois I wrote on the meeting summary form:

> Often checks other's perceptions of the appropriateness of behaviour. Needs to work on self-confidence - learn to trust her own feelings and opinions.
>
> Formative Evaluation
> November 28th

On the one hand, then, Lois's comfort in class increased as her role of advisor and confidante solidified but it was not until the class almost finished that Lois was able to tell Peter, another trainer, that she did not like an exercise, something she said she would never have been able to do before the class. What Lois does not write about, however, is her frustration and anger with some members of the group who Lois felt, "really shouldn't have been there." What annoyed her most it seems, was the fact that some of the women were getting away with behaviour such as playing bingo when they should have been going to their work placements. The crime was compounded by their apparent satisfaction with "putting one over on the staff:"

> ...I think that those women who couldn't be bothered to show up for class, there should have been a reason why...I mean you're taking on a course and you're being responsible and that didn't show any responsibility. I think something should have been done about it...they were just sort of , uh, getting a free ride. You know? Sort of...that's how I felt anyways. Like I felt they were just sort of laughing in your faces to be honest with you. And that shouldn't have been. They took that on as a responsibility, you know, and they should have been responsible enough to come through with it.
>
> Interview #1

This irresponsibility seemed almost intolerable to Lois and she returns to this theme often, and with considerable emotion, in her interview. The fact that Lois was working hard toward a goal while many of them were playing subsidized bingo made Lois very angry and what seemed to infuriate her most was the naivete of the staff who remained, in her eyes unaware of the problems. Curiously, however, none of this outrage is alluded to in her writing where Lois speaks only of common goals and group support. It is interesting that at the end of one lengthy diatribe against some of the other women there is a considerable pause and then Lois tentatively asked, "Does that sound stupid?". Lois spoke of her anger and disappointment with deep conviction but still needed, it seemed, some outside verification of her views.

The most enduring memory Lois has of the program's helpful aspects is that of small groups work:

> L: I think what stands out most in my mind is having to work in the groups. At first I was really afraid to work in the groups.
>
> R: Why?
>
> L: Because, again, I didn't know if these people in this group would accept me for who I was or respect me for who I was cause everybody wants to be respected, you know. And it ware really hard at first but working in the groups and doing it gradually...it, you know, made it come around. I think that was really good.
>
> Interview #1

This small group approach was less threatening than whole class situations and through group work, Lois gradually began to "open up" to others which she saw as one of the greatest benefits of participation in the course. Lois also rediscovered her capabilities, especially in contexts which were skill oriented such as first aid or the cooking class at NAIT. "I know I am a capable person," she writes several times and her capabilities seemed best expressed by both her role in the classroom and her ability in different skill areas. Lois also felt that the course helped her to accept who she was, including her limitations:

> And its [the program] helped me to accept my limitations. Like before, or even quite often now, I'll say I'm going out to work anyways. Like, I don't care. But I've learned, I'm not less a person cause I can't. You know I always figured well I can't go to work so I'm this dummy that's sitting around on welfare and you know, that's not me. I went to this course and I succeeded. Um, I worked hard and I accomplished and it made me see that I could accomplish.
>
> Interview #1

She also felt that she no longer had "a big wall" around herself and although she states that it takes time to build trust, she saw herself as much more outgoing and open:

> I'm really happy to be in this class. It gives as much as you are willing to put into it and I look forward to days now. I look forward to the interaction with the other women and instructors, although I know I'm not as outgoing as I could be, I'm coming along nicely.
>
> Formative Evaluation
> November 28th

Whatever Lois's reservations about the other women were, the course seemed to provide her with an opportunity to find a valuable niche for herself among the other women and to use that place as a starting point for her growth. Although she is very forthright about her disappointment in the staff for not having intervened effectively with some women, both her written and spoken comments refer many times to the value of the group. She is clearly reluctant to present anything but the positive aspects of the class in her daily log (and "positive" is a word used quite frequently by Lois), but even her interview concludes with praise for the others:

> I still wish we could be together but I'm glad we're not because it's time for everybody to venture out and do what they have to do. Like it was good...it was a great group of women...
>
> Interview #1

Kathy

> Like I always felt when I stayed home, I always felt trapped. I don't feel trapped no more, you know. Not at all. Like before, it would get really bad. I really complained, "I hate this house. I want out of here (laughs)." I really felt trapped in that house but now I don't, you know. That's what the course did for me. It really got me off sitting around all day, every day.
>
> Interview #1

Kathy was the youngest research participant at twenty-six. She is a single parent with two young boys and at the time of the study, she was working at both an Edmonton hotel (which was her TPH placement during the program) and for the provincial government. During the course of the program, Kathy never expressed verbally or in writing, a negative thought with respect to her program experiences. Her TPH supervisors described Kathy as "bubbly," "cheerful" and "friendly." In class, Kathy seemed grounded in the "dailyness" of her existence and the basis of her interaction with the other women centred on discussions of child care, boyfriends, shopping and other practical matters associated with being young, female and a mother of two young boys. Given Kathy's apparent relentless optimism with respect to the program and the consistency of her behaviour day to day, I wondered, as a trainer in the program, what sort of impact, if any, the program was having on the way Kathy viewed herself and her world. The course, as it turned out, had accomplished for Kathy precisely what the CJS objectives had intended it do: it got her out of the house. For Kathy, the significance of doing so reached beyond the program objectives to inform the way she viewed her role as a mother and her potential and a member of the labour force.

Kathy's writing in her daily log follows generally the same format: "Today we learned about ...," she begins. Then she goes on to describe the activity and ends with, "And I really enjoyed it." It is very simple writing and part of the reasons for this is Kathy's low level of education (grade eight) which makes writing difficult for her. On the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) administered to the group at Alberta Vocational Centre, Kathy's language score was equivalent to the median score of children with 3.7 years of schooling. Sometimes, as well, she states that she found the classroom exercises a bit of a struggle:

> Today in school we worked on
> goals and I found it difficult
> to put in to words what I wanted
> to say or how to word it right.
> Daily Log - October 23rd

And:

> Today in school we worked on self-assessment. I found a few spots that were hard to understand but once I understood, it went well.
>
> Daily log - October 17th

Kathy's low level of education did not handicap her in this particular program because the program itself was oriented specifically to those skills required by occupations in the hospitality industry, and Kathy was one of the first women to be offered a full-time position with her TPH. However, the position is poorly paid and Kathy may well find her education a barrier in the future if she feels the need to seek different employment.

Another interesting aspect of Kathy's writing is the terms she used to describe the course. She talked about "school" to refer to classroom activities and she often thanked me, in my capacity as life skills trainer, for being a "great teacher." Kathy was most probably drawing on familiar school vocabulary to talk about her program experiences it also suggests Kathy's perception of the staff as having authority, much like her public school teachers did. She thanks, on one occasion, me and Maria for "letting her go" to see her seriously ill niece in the hospital. This perception of others as having both authority and control over Kathy was not an uncommon theme during her conversations with the researcher and this becomes plainer as Kathy describes the time immediately proceeding her exit from Junior High.

Not long after Kathy left school and began working, she met her first boyfriend who was to become the father of her two boys. "Two months later," Kathy said, "he had me moved out." What followed was a relationship characterized by both abuse and control. Kathy describes Bruce, her boyfriend's controlling behaviour in the following examples:

> Like when Ned was one month old, we were living with his sister. And all of the sudden I wasn't even allowed to pick him up.
>
> Interview #1

Or:

> We never ever had food to even feed [Ned] so I was always glad that he was with mum and dad, you know....Bob, you know, always thought of himself, you know so if he was going to eat, he would eat before he'd let me or Ned so I'd give Ned to mum and dad knowing he'd be safe alright.
>
> Interview #1

Kathy's boyfriend's control extended to her as well and he did not allow her to wear make-up or take care of her personal appearance. Sometimes he would burn holes in her shirts, and Kathy remembers "being slapped around" when she spoke to his friends. She did attempt to leave the relationship but once again, she felt herself without the necessary self-control to stay away:

> I always tried to get away from him. It got to the point where he'd go to the bathroom with me. I was never allowed to go to the bathroom by myself cause he knew I'd take off any chance I got. Then I'd take off, get away and he'd get me on the phone and have me sucked back in and I'd be right back there. It was crazy. Sometimes in my dreams I dreamed that he sucked me right back in again.
>
> Interview #1

Bruce was able to accomplish this by a combination of threats and pleas and Kathy stayed with him for over three years. "Why?" I asked. She replied:

> I don't know. You know it seemed like you love them so much yet you hate their guts. It was a really strange relationship.
>
> Interview #1

When Kathy tried to leave, Bruce would start to cry and "make me feel so guilty that I'd stay." Eventually, Kathy's parents forced the issue by threatening to take Ned, Kathy's young son, away from her. Kathy realized that she was unable to leave on her own volition and with her parent's help, she severed her relationship with Bruce. A short time later, Kathy discovered she was pregnant with her second son.

Kathy's sense of having little control over her own life can be seen, as well, in her attitude towards and the circumstances surrounding her two pregnancies. She is unsure why she became pregnant both times and describes the experience in this way:

> I just never really thought about it. And then once I found out I was pregnant, I was happy even though I was a young girl. I always wanted to be a mum. Always.
>
> Interview #1

Kathy never wanted to work. She wanted to stay home with her children. The theme is similar in discussion of her second pregnancy:

> I guess I never really worried about being pregnant. I don't know why. maybe because in my heart I would have loved having more kids...I got my dad to give me the money to get an IUD and Bruce took it and spent it.
>
> Interview #1

It would seem that pregnancy was something that Kathy let happen to her and might have been, in part, a way of carving out an important role for herself in the context of debilitating abuse. The importance she places on "being a mum" would lend evidence for this.

Kathy's second relationship followed soon after her first and she found herself growing increasingly discontented with her "stay at home" status. Although Kathy felt good about her ability to manage her home effectively, she "hated feeling trapped," and "any chance I had of one of my friends picking me up and just going to the mall or anything, I'd always go." The CJS program allowed Kathy the opportunity to leave the house on a consistent, daily basis and it was this aspect of the program which Kathy valued the most.

Kathy was effusive about her first day at her TPH:

> Like my first day at the (hotel), like I was just on a cloud. I mean, Diane, when she seen the hours we have and the week-end bit, she just complained and I said, "I don't care. I'm getting my foot in the door. I'm getting a chance to be out there." I just had...I don't know what got into me (laughs), but I had a really good outlook at going to that job. I just was in the clouds about it.
>
> Interview #1

Kathy perceived herself as successful at her work and often commented on how well she was doing in her daily log:

> Back at work this morning for 7:00 am. Today we had alot of checkouts. We got really busy and I did great.
>
> Daily log - November 26th

For Kathy, the program was a way out of the house and the roles that she had become "trapped" in.

Another enduring memory of the program for Kathy was simply how much she enjoyed it: "We always had so much fun." This is understandable given her desperation to be out of her house. She was able to come to a place everyday, interact with many other women and become part of a community of people who valued her and shared her concerns:

> Then things would be said that would really get me like someone saying something about having the courage to make the change. I don't know why...all of a sudden I had a lump in my throat, I was fighting off these tears cause I...well that's exactly how I seen myself was that is was really hard to make the change cause for awhile Tom (second boyfriend) bothered me to get a job, you know, just to get out because I complained so much (laughs).
>
> Interview #1

But along with her enjoyment of her classmates, Kathy displayed an on-going concern for their own success, and most log entries that spoke of her own progress are coupled with the hope that the others were doing as well. Kathy, it seemed, had no hidden agenda. She liked everybody, shrugged at behaviour that annoyed others and maintained an on-going enthusiasm for her TPH as well as an attitude of indebtedness for her acceptance into the program.

Kathy's good cheer and optimism was the flip-side, however, of her aversion to conflict of any kind. "Conflict day" was especially difficult for her:

> Well they were talking like that while everybody was saying what they were saying and I was feeling really...I was feeling like crying. I don't know why. Just because there was that much conflict between some of them. I just felt, "oh, this isn't the situation I want to be in." That kind of thing.
>
> Interview #1

Conflict on any level was something Kathy tried very hard to avoid, even when directly confronted as she was by her friend:

> I don't like having conflicts with people, you know. Like when my friend Donna lived in the basement and we had a fight and it just disturbed me like hell and I tried and tried to make up with her. Like I was doing everything and she just would not make up with me and I felt...I just don't like arguing with people.
>
> Interview #1

Kathy's not sure why she has this reaction although she suspects it may have something to do with her first boyfriend and her unwillingness to fight back for fear that the violence would escalate. This compliant behaviour was something Kathy felt badly about so perhaps in order to avoid the self-label of "wimp" leads Kathy to avoid confrontations. Finding a group with common interests was also a happy discovery for Kathy and she may not have wanted to see the apparent cohesiveness of the group jeopardized. "I had never been out like that for years," Kathy said. Conflict in this context would thus be both unfamiliar and threatening.

There were rewards of participating in the program other than it being a vehicle for Kathy's re-entry into the social world. Specific skill training at NAIT was valued for improving her on the job performance. She remembered hospitality tips such as using customers' names and serving left to right. She also credits the "personal development" section as being useful to her:

> Well I think, for one, it will give me better customer relations, for one. Because, like I say, even when I went to my interview, I felt so...you know, I was really aware of how I was sitting and I never really thought of that before. I think its helped me a lot now in...as for fashion too, with having Margo tell us some of the stuff. And, I don't know, I think it made me realize things, too.
>
> Interview #1

Kathy also recognized the importance of planning for the future which had been difficult for her due to her economic circumstances. Her only criticism of the program, in fact, is that it led the women to believe that their financial situation would be significantly improved which was not the case in view of the targeted industry. The course also had a positive impact of her sons:

> You know, I think it's better that they see that I'm getting out there you know. So it shows them a little independence, I guess. Cause now they gotta do more things for themselves, too, you know. I mean, I did everything for them.
>
> Interview #1

Kathy's identity is still very much tied in with her roles as a housewife, mate and mother as indicated in her final evaluation of the program:

> I had a lack of motivation before this program, and now I feel better about myself because I'm out working and being a full-time mother. So the motivation sure is back and in full force.
>
> Summative Evaluation

On the importance of men in her life, Kathy says:

> I like having someone to...not really take care of but you know, I like having somebody else there. I don't know if it makes me feel more secure or...it's probably what it is. I feel more secure.
>
> Interview #1

However, the importance of a relationship in Kathy's life is tempered by her sense of independence. When she was asked what being a woman meant to her she replied:

> Um, being a mum. Being able to make it on your own and also having someone to care for. Just makes it seem more worthwhile having a house cleaned when someone's coming home."
>
> Interview #1

It would appear that being a dual career woman sits quite comfortably with Kathy.

As one of the trainers, I remember an interesting conversation with Kathy during a one-to-one feedback session near the beginning of the program. She was explaining to me why she couldn't follow the advice of the fashion consultant and cut her hair. "I can't," she insisted, "I can't cut my hair. Kathy and I debated the distinction between "can't" and "choosing not to" for some time before she finally told me of her first relationship and how her boyfriend had never let her take care of her personal appearance in order that she not appear sexually attractive to other men. Now that she was able to care again, she was steadfast in her refusal to tamper with what she considered her greatest physical asset; her hair. After our session I wrote:

> -talked quite a bit about image and motivation for growing her hair. Symptomatic of her concern for acceptance by men as a reaction against a bad experience. Kathy needs to work on feeling good about herself independent of sexual reinforcement - recognizing her own personal worth in roles other than girlfriend.
> Formative Evaluation
> November

Five months later, after the final one-to-one feedback session I wrote:

> -matured tremendously - feels that it has a lot to do with situations she's been forced to deal with - speech slower and clearer - grammar better - very excited about future
> Summative Evaluation -
> April

Whether my concerns were valid in the first instance or even whether either observation was significant, Kathy had changed. She no longer liked jeans, she told me, and preferred dresses. She still likes to dance but didn't like to drink any more, and had given up long hair and mini skirts. How much this maturity could be attributed to her experience in the program is questionable but perhaps the change in Kathy's demeanour was significant of her lessened preoccupation with her value as a sexual companion and her growing conviction that as a woman, she could have her cake and eat it too.

Carol

> Goals: financial security so that I can concentrate fully on achieving respect and continuing to learn and expand my horizons. I will always spend a certain amount of quality time with my family and friends but I would like to keep learning and experiencing new things for the duration of my life.
> (classroom exercise)

The theme of learning occurs repeatedly throughout conversations with Carol as well as in her personal writing. She speaks of the need for knowledge and skills, the content that was interesting, the trainers grasp of the material, and the barriers to her maximizing her potential as a learner. I remember being somewhat surprised and a little impressed to hear the term "lifelong education" used by Carol so seriously. Carol's preoccupation with the quest for knowledge, however, did not translate into a successful transition into the workforce. After securing employment at her TPH, Carol ran into a staff conflict and abruptly quit. Somewhere, it would seem, the connection between knowledge and practice was not successfully forged for Carol.

Carol is forty-six, divorced and living on her own. At the time of this study, she was unemployed and living alone. All of her children have left home. She was the last interviewee and the first where sexual or physical abuse played no role in her childhood or marriage. She was married at nineteen after graduating from high school and working for a year. A year and a half later, Carol began her family. She did toy briefly with the idea of University but at that time (mid 1960's) Carol says, going to University was the exception:

> Maybe education and university wasn't as important then as it is now. It was the going thing to get married and have children. Usually the wife didn't work...stayed home and raised the kids and did the housework. Unless you had to work or unless you were quite different.
>
> Interview #1

Carol's mother worked but Carol felt that staying at home and raising the children was both the norm and the desirable thing to do. She has some regrets about not going to university and muses that this missed opportunity as contributed to the central place education now takes in her priorities.

Carol's marriage lasted seventeen years and ended when she found out her husband has been unfaithful to her. Carol says that she is just "awful that way," and did not see the relationship as restorable. The incident left her "kind of mistrustful of relationships." After her husband left, Carol remained at home to raise her children with financial help from her husband and social assistance. She did not consider work or school a possibility at the time:

> I just couldn't see myself leaving these kids and going into town everyday. Going to school. I just couldn't see it at the time. I had too much on my mind. I didn't think I could concentrate on what I was doing. So...I just couldn't do it.
>
> Interview #1

This is the first occurrence of the phrase "I just couldn't," to describe choices or options that were rejected by Carol. This way of describing the rejection of some action is apparent in her discussion of her desire to lose weight:

> If I can do this (lose weight), I will be self-confident and have lots of self-esteem. Yeah, weight is really a big thing with me. I'd give my eye teeth if I could lose it but its just I have no will power. It's terrible.
>
> Interview #1

This apparent lack of control over certain circumstances in Carol's life becomes most obvious when she discusses her decision to quit her job.

Carol began the reentry program with the specific objective of learning skills and acquiring knowledge that would enable her to secure employment in the hospitality field, and she brought this learning perspective to all parts of the program. Activities such as NAIT and "dress for success" were particularly relevant to Carol's learning agenda as they were specifically related to skill development. "I like going some place where you learn things," she said, and this learning for Carol, should be primarily concerned with skills or knowledge, not attitudes. After a one-to-one feedback session with Carol I wrote:

> -happy with course - learning experience
> -Carol believes adult ed. shouldn't include past problems/experiences - class should be problems solvers. Carol disappointed in group. Carol more interested in content rather than process
>
> Formative Evaluation
> November

Any class work that attempted to address the affective mode seemed largely irrelevant to Carol's needs.

It was clear, however, that Carol viewed herself as a competent learner and did not extend that description to the rest of the class. "I like to discuss things and debate things, and learn things," she said, "I like that kind of atmosphere."

Unfortunately, in Carol's view, the rest of the women seemed unwilling or perhaps, unable to participate at the same cognitive level as Carol. When Carol was asked why she thought the other women "couldn't get into it (the classroom activities) in the same way," she replied:

> I don't know. They just don't like it, I guess. They're not serious enough about it. I think it probably showed at the end. That they weren't serious enough about it.
>
> Interview #1

Carol had strong evidence for this with respect to learning opportunities:

> Well, they worked in the hospitality industry, some of them. They didn't want to go to some place where you could move on and keep advancing. They wouldn't take courses and I mean, when you get a free NAIT course offered, I think that's a good deal. For anybody. But they didn't seem to be interested in that. They just wanted to pass the time in class and not...and not think about their future, I guess, in terms of that class. And what they were going to get out of it and what they...and what the next goal was going to be and they just...some people I felt just would never get into it.
>
> Interview #1

Everyone, insisted Carol, had an obligation to "never stop learning," and the fact that other women abdicated this responsibility really "bugged" Carol.

She was not neutral with respect to the other's learning priorities assumedly became they prevented her from fully participating in the activity at hand. "Conflict Day" during the section of Supervision, was especially disappointing for Carol which she saw was largely an exercise of two women trying to become friends. Carol wrote extensively about his day and compared it to her own experience in grade one where she learned that you couldn't be friends with everyone and it is clear that she thinks others should share this view:

> Instead of trying to always analyze these bad relationships, I would like to cultivate the good close relationships. I think it makes for a happier life. When we become adults and go out into the world, we have to be responsible for our actions...
> I feel some of the people in my class have mental problems that they should clear up before coming into a job reentry program. I feel they have to be mentally stable before they can take on the challenge of the work force. I have tried to do my best in every aspect of this course and also have taken on extra courses. I don't want to feel like I'm in a kindergarten class or on a psychiatric group. I am very disillusioned by this. It's very hard to get and stay motivated when people around you don't care or have a negative attitude...

> I really don't think anything was accomplished in class this afternoon. I don't think the people who have these conflicts are going to become any better friends.
>
> Daily log - February 14th

It seemed clear that Carol regarded the program as a place to learn things rather than work on personal problems. In her view, these two activities were mutually exclusive.

Carol, as well, (and in notable contrast to the other women), did not speak much of the support offered by the other women. Nor does she display much identification with the group. She speaks of the interesting variety among the group members and says once during the interview that she "thought it was a great group," but her comments seem to reflect her role as interested observer rather than involved participant. The only mention Carol makes of feeling like she belongs to the group in any way is in the context of the self-image course:

> Well, the self-image course was really good. And then having all these people together feeling sort of the same way. It was really good. And the support was really good.
>
> Interview #1

In her final course evaluation, Carol writes: "I think for the type of people you deal with, you have done very well." This statement seems to indicate that she saw herself outside that "type." It is important to note at this point, however, that Carol's description of the program and her understanding of its impact on her, changed quite perceptively from interview #1 to the group interview.

Carol saw her role as mother and housewife as important but there is not evidence that she felt her past experiences in these roles provided her with skills she could take with her into the workplace:

> My first day!! I was totally intimidated by the computers. I want to try these computers but I am scared because this place is so busy. I'm afraid I'll screw up.
>
> Daily log - November 15th

Carol felt that she was inadequately prepared for her training experience and said so in a class evaluation. Her TPH supervisor commented that Carol must "learn to relax and understand that everyone makes mistakes," but for Carol, making mistakes was the same as "making a fool out of myself," and it was difficult to convince her that these were training positions with all that term implies. Carol discovered, however, that she was able to learn computer skills and her on-site training appeared to be very successful, and Carol found employment there. After the program was over, though, the office learned the news that Carol had suddenly walked off the job and could not be reached with a new offer.

Carol ran into staff conflict soon after starting in her position at a prestigious Edmonton hotel. Apparently, her supervisor was extremely rude and was decidedly non-helpful in her training capacity. Carol talks about her decision to leave the position:

> I tried it (the position), and oh, it was just impossible. I couldn't do it. I stayed awake all Monday night trying to figure out how to do it and I just...it was impossible. I just couldn't do it. I couldn't figure a way out. How to get along with her. I couldn't...I just couldn't..I tried and tried. She was just so rude and ignorant and she wouldn't help me and I thought, "oh, there's just no way I can do this. I can't do this...and the only thing I could think of to do was to leave.
>
> Interview #1

Carol felt like a "failure" as a result of being unable to resolve this conflict but she was also disappointed in the fact that they job had been found through a personnel agency that was connected to the program. Carol would have much preferred to obtain the position on her own merits:

> I just couldn't help it. I just felt that I'd failed because he'd (agency employee) had to get this job for me and I didn't want it that way.
>
> Interview #1

When questioned about her strategy should she be faced with a similar work-related problem, Carol was vague:

> I don't know. I've never run into that problem before. There's been people that I haven't liked or whatever. But not to the point where they're rude to you right out loud.
>
> Interview #1

It is interesting to note that Carol's attitude towards conflict at work and conflict in the class is very different. While she seemed philosophical about the fact that you could not expect everyone to like you and made this point in her discussion of class conflict, she was much less fatalistic about this when faced with a supervisor who, on the face of it, did not appear to like her. In the work setting, this became an insurmountable problem for Carol while in a class everyone else's failure to adopt this common sense view was a source of irritation for her.

Carol enjoyed many aspects of the program and mentions specifically the self-image course (by which she meant lifeskills) where she said she learned things about herself that she had never known, and, as a result, achieving her goals no longer seemed impossible. But this does not seem to be a case of self-discovery for Carol, facilitated by certain activities. She speaks of learning in a traditional sense indicating that knowledge of oneself comes from some outside authority: "I'm learning what is required of us to feel good about ourselves," she writes. And this learning did not seem connected to Carol's past experiences which is consistent with her view of adult education and the role experience plays in learning.

Perhaps Carol's expectations were coloured by her previous school experience which was likely quite traditional in nature, or perhaps Carol was expecting something that she imagined would be close to her missed educational opportunities as a young woman. In any event, Carol seemed unable to generalize her observations in class to other context - most notably work. She felt that problems and backgrounds were out of place in the adult education classroom, and as a result, did not see the other women's ways of dealing with their problems as capable of informing her own coping strategies. However, Carol does not see her failure to maintain employment reflecting negatively on the program and it should be noted that during the interview, Carol was both more charitable about her peers and more enthusiastic about the program's impact on her own life than was indicated by her daily log.

Although Carol saw herself as a serious and reflective learner, the content of the program never addressed for her what turned out to be her most pressing issue: dealing with difficult work situations. Because Carol left her job so quickly after the program's end, she seems to be the one study participant who provides some evidence of dependency on the program. However, it could simply be that the work situation was untenable for anyone. In any event, Carol's version of her future returns to the theme of continued learning the form of courses and for Carol this seems the most direct route to future success. Her story is perhaps illustrative of a particular paradox inherent in the program: the classroom work is designed to help women believe that they can be and do whatever they want and then we send them into a working world that does not support such a view.

Judy

> All these years, all through the years, I had this feeling of, uh, like the insecurity and dependency and no control and, like lack of structure. And its like now I have all this control. Like I have all this power to do with my own life.
>
> Interview #1

Throughout the job reentry program, the staff periodically invited women from a former program in to talk to the women about their experiences during and after the course. We felt that this presentation would provide an important link between the class and what many popularly term, "the real world." The women invited to speak had all made successful transitions to work and their presentation was identified in the program schedule as "reentry success stories." All of us felt that Judy would make an ideal speaker for future programs as she was, by all accounts, a success story. Her journey to that point, however, was emotional and difficult, and it took the entire seven months until Judy came to view herself in those successful terms.

Judy is a single parent of three school-aged children. She has been married and divorced three times, and at the time of this research, she was employed at a fitness club which was also her TPH placement during the program. At eighteen, Judy was living with her family in Eastern Canada. She found herself pregnant and decided to get married because: "it was a good reasons to leave home." Home, as Judy described it, was a very unhappy place. Her parents both drank heavily and Judy suffered from violent attacks at the hands of her father. This violent behaviour was apparently quite common to other members of the extended family and Judy recalls that it was "under every roof." Her experience with violence continued under her own roof for her first two marriages, a not unlikely pattern for domestic violence (Boulette an Anderson, 1985).

Judy isn't sure why she married two violent men:

> I just didn't know anything different. It was just the way that it was. I just accepted it. I never questioned it, ever, that it was wrong...or wasn't right.
> Interview #1

Judy thought that, in the end, it was just easier to accept the abuse than to try and take action:

> Well, I'd never heard of a shelter, ever. And one time when my second husband was extremely violent and I, at one point, got other people involved. I went to Social Agencies and that and I just...it just wasn't worth it for the kind of treatment that I got from them. I had...I went to see a priest one time and I think his words to me were, "Maybe you're a masochist. Did you ever think about that?" He said, "maybe you enjoy being hit." One time I called the police and this guy broke into my home. And I said, "okay, like I'm ready to do something to get ride of him. You send him for help and I'll sign papers. And they said...and my husband spoke up and said, "hey this is my wife, so this is her home, this is my home." And they told me to get my stuff and leave for the night and go to the shelter...
>
> It seemed like a whole different path...of pain, of hardship. It was just easier to accept the behaviour, the treatment or whatever than to do anything.
>
> Interview #1

Judy's acceptance of the violent behaviour became inexorably bound up in her perception of what it meant to be a woman, and this perception became one of the more pressing issues for her during the program.

Judy's self-esteem, at this time, was virtually non-existent:

> Oh my God, self-esteem. I didn't even know what that was. Everything...I don't know...my self image was just absolutely terrible. Like I was extremely overweight...I just didn't care. I was just...I just accept it.
> Interview #1

Judy seldom dressed properly, never wore make-up or did any of the things that she associated with caring about her appearance. For her, this was the normal course of event and after a time, she began to believe that was responsible for or deserving of, the abuse. These feelings had their beginnings in her experience has a child:

> Judy: I thought I deserved it.
>
> Researcher: Did you?
>
> Judy: Yeah, I did. I must be doing something wrong here. It was the same thing with growing up. I used to think, you know, this adult man cannot be doing things for no reasons, you know...I guess I just wasn't doing it right, you know, what I was supposed to be doing.
> Interview #1

This self blame along with the Judy's declining interest in her appearance, led to increasing feelings of isolation, especially from young girls around her: "I just didn't feel like I belonged. Fit in anywhere." This theme of isolation resurfaces when Judy speaks of her participation in the reentry program.

Judy dissolved her second marriage and this event was paralleled by a rapid weight loss and a renewed interest in her appearance. She was out west at this time, and had begun work in a hotel position for which she felt unqualified. As she described it:

> I threw myself right back into it. I still remember these guys drinking with their hands on my legs, stuff like that and just accepting it to keep my job...
>
> Interview #1

Judy also had two small children at this point and was felt constrained by financial obligations to keep her job.

Judy's third husband was very unlike the previous two: passive to the point where she could "walk all over him." Although there was an absence of violence in this marriage, it still did not represent what Judy was seeking with respect to a relationship and that marriage ended after four years. Judy felt that the marriage ended, in part, because it broke the pattern of abuse that she had become used to:

> I just...I don't know...maybe I was looking for him, to, uh, treat me wrongly or something, I don't know.
>
> Interview #1

During this marriage, Judy also began to lead a very active social life and found herself, for the first time, having fun. People were paying attention to Judy and she thought that was "just great." This was particularly gratifying for Judy given her low self-esteem. Judy's third marriage was her last.

Judy's history of marriage reflects both her view of her role as a woman, and her need to be as she puts it, "saved from the responsibility of controlling her life:

> I might have to go to work or I might have to talk back to somebody if they ask me something you know: Or it's too difficult to show intelligence.
> Interview #1

Marriage is also part of what Judy identifies as the main issues in her past: "being fat, being married, having kids...being around jerks." Marriage continues to be an option for Judy in the present but not as a means of obtaining support for herself or her children as Judy feels that she is capable of providing that for herself. She also speaks of avoiding the necessity of "standing up for herself," or "showing intelligence" as another motivating factor for seeking out marriage. No longer needing such a sanctuary has been both a frightening and exhilarating change for Judy.

Judy had worked before she entered the reentry program but had done so primarily as a way to make money for her family and not as a means to any personal satisfaction. She had considered and at one time, enroled in further education but had not pursued it seriously until she came across the newspaper advertisement for the reentry program and thought, "You're kids are all in school now and it's time to do something for yourself." It was over the course of the program that Judy got the "push" she needed to see her feelings of "there must be something better" come to fruition.

The reentry program held no surprises for Judy in terms of its organization and structure other than the section on lifeskills:

> It was pretty much...the only thing that I was surprised about was the lifeskills. I had never dealt with anything like that before. And to tell you the truth, I didn't know anything existed like that. To help people do things like that.
>
> Well, I just didn't realize it was such an issue with everybody. Like, you know, that these were surprises you know. Like I always felt that it was just me, you know, that had the insecurities, inadequate feelings and stuff and I was just surprised that all these other women felt the exact same way.
>
> Interview #1

This discovery, however, was tempered with Judy's ambivalent feelings of being attached to a group of "twenty-five welfare women" That she said, "kind of got to me," and the first few days saw Judy determined to keep her own counsel at any cost while keeping one eye on the classroom door. In Judy's eyes, so many of the women had accepted their lives:

> ...I got the feeling that so many, so many of them, had cepted it. You know, they were bitching, you know about that, I don't know...that welfare wouldn't give them this and welfare wouldn't give them that. You know, they just seemed to expect it or want it. I just didn't want to be put in the same group of that.
>
> Interview #1

Judy's ambivalence towards sharing a group identity continued to isolate her, in a sense, from the rest of the group. She felt differently about her status and had difficult accepting the rest of the women's perception of their own. Part of this ambivalence can be attributed to Judy's awareness of the social stigma attached to welfare recipients:

> I don't know if we do it or if society does it, but you kind of feel lower, you know, and I didn't like feeling like that and I didn't want to feel like that.
>
> Daily log - February 13th

The women, in Judy's opinion, "acted like a welfare bunch," which both embarrassed and disappointed her:

> I have to learn to separate myself from the others. Separate myself in the way when they act or say something that I feel is not right that it can't concern me.
>
> Daily log - February 13th

The session of the program conducted at NAIT cemented this frustration and at this point, Judy almost quit. She was determined that everyday "would be the day that some of the girls won't get to me." These feelings culminated during the supervision section of the course and came to a head on "Conflict Day." Judy became the spokesperson for a group session which evolved into an attempt to address the underlying current of tension which by that time, had developed in the group. Judy sees this as an important day for her:

> I thought okay, let's be honest and, you know, I controlled myself and I was quite proud of myself for that.
>
> Interview #1

And in her log, Judy writes:

> The afternoon was an experience.
> After feeling totally attacked,
> I stayed rational which was a
> big step for me. It's like
> these feelings were ignored for
> years. I guess its hard for me
> to put this down, Lori, but its
> like I'm finally parting with
> the past and excuses. It seems
> for weeks that this has been
> waiting to be dealt with. Today
> this new confidence was scary.
> I've dealt with a lot of new
> feelings since this course began
> but I almost expected these
> feelings. But today was
> something that really took me
> half guard. I gained new
> respect for some of the girls-
> but I guess I'm finally ready to
> take that step I've avoided.
> February 14th

Judy had the courage to speak assertively about her concerns and recognized that because she "chose to stick her neck out," the conflict was directed at her. She had gone from someone who was determined not to contribute to class to a person that was willing to take on the challenge of dealing with group conflict.

Despite Judy's reluctance to be a part of the group, however, she identified her own determination as a factor in her willingness to "stick with it." Despite her on-going ambivalence towards the group, Judy identified several aspects of the program that she found beneficial. One of her happier discoveries was that she had developed many skills in her other capacities as a mother and housewife and that these skills were transferable to other contexts. Her work experience at her TPH was very successful as verified by her TPH evaluations and Judy managed to weather some difficult times with respect to management problems. Often, however, Judy is perceived as having a lack of confidence by herself and others. This continues to be an on-gong issue for Judy.

Another important aspect of the course was assertiveness training which Judy put to use in her own family life. This improved Judy's problematic relationship with her daughter, and Judy was able to identify her own needs as important and not necessarily subject to prioritizing in relation to the needs of the rest of the family:

> I enjoy doing aerobics or stuff like that and I thought, "how can I possibly go there when they might need a pie for Sunday?" So now I buy the pie and go to aerobics.
>
> Interview #1

This ability to put her needs first is part of Judy's growing conviction that she is actually deserving of her own attention and a life that is free from violence or abuse.

The most significant event in the program for Judy was a field trip to the University and a presentation by a woman manager. Judy returns again and again to this event in her conversation. The presenter was speaking of her own experiences as a career woman and of how, for a long time, she felt she was going to be "found out," as not belonging . It took this woman some time to feel that she had rightly earned a placed in the management world. This observation had a great deal of resonance for Judy as she had also felt that her real self would be eventually found out and once that happened, others would promptly reject her:

> Like I knew there was things that I wanted. I just couldn't go after them. That's why, you know, I talk about Kathy all the time, and a lot of them said to me, "well it was okay." But when she said those words to me that somebody's going to say "you, you're so different and that," that's how I've always felt...so take a room of 20 people and I would stick out so different. And I was always on the verge and this has helped me to got that step....
>
> Interview #1

To hear the presenter echo Judy's inner feelings was a moment of revelation for Judy and was part of her understanding that the feelings she had were part of the experience of many other women:

> ...I'm the only one feeling, you know, that, you know, I'm so insecure or shy or I can't speak or you know, that people are going to kick me down and I though it was just feelings that I was feeling...I felt that I was the only one that, you know, felt like this, and when I seen that there was lots of other women that felt like this I expected their eyes to open too and their feelings to change.
>
> Interview #1

To be able to say the sort of "A-ha!" that signifies a sudden penetration and understanding of what had previously been muddy is an exciting and emotional moment for anybody. Judy's growing understanding of herself and her place in the world was a process of great importance for her. She looked around, fully expecting the others to see what had suddenly become so clear to her and when they didn't, Judy was disappointed. Even though Judy continued to feel disappointed in some of the other women however, she ceased to feel isolated from them.

The change that Judy was undergoing began in her mid-twenties, long before the reentry program when Judy said she began to mature. Change was frightening for Judy, however, and part of that fear is attributable to an absence of the old fears and thus the old excuses:

> It [the program] taught me, you know, things like how I manage my time and how I have control over the things that I want to have control over. And what I choose to do...if I really need it or I really want it or, you know, no excuses any more.
>
> Interview #1

Judy's growing confidence in herself, her abilities and her improved self-esteem contributed to her sense of personal power:

> I guess its (independence) the power to do with my own life that I never felt I had before.
>
> Interview #1

This is a personal sense of power for Judy but she also sees power located in the group:

> It was just like I'm not the only woman there and to realize that others are feeling that way and to join together to realize that it can be done.
>
> Interview #1

Power it appears, is also directly tied to financial independence and for Judy, this means:

> ...being able to do the things, the basics, like put a roof over my head and for my kids and account for my own time, just for myself.
>
> Interview #1

Power also releases Judy from her expectations of marriage providing security for herself and her children. However, Judy still regards her own sense of power and independence as tied to her identity as a woman and mother:

> Being a woman means, I don't know how to answer that...my responsibilities and my nurturing and all that at home with my family.
>
> Interview #1

Judy has also developed an awareness of the larger issues facing many women:

> I also feel that I have struggles ahead of me to fight for the things that...that I feel that are mine. For some reason, I have to prove that I deserve them, instead of just having them.
>
> Interview #1

Many of the challenges Judy faced, and the trepidation she felt, were almost always understood by her, as a lack of confidence. Towards the end of the program, however, Judy began to sort out issues of her own development from problems or barriers which existed outside of herself and were often a function of her status as a female single parent. I remember pointing this out to her when she sat with me during a one-to-one feedback session, discouraged by her inability to leave the program as confident as she felt she needed to be. When I probed to understand what event had led to this disappointed, Judy spoke of having to work alone at a bar after club event and being harassed by several of the male patrons who were getting progressively drunker as the afternoon wore on. Her insecurity was exacerbated by the fact that she had never learned to tend bar and hadn't had to do so as part of her on-site training. We talked at length about why she felt that it was a deficiency in her rather than an unmanageable context which led to the unhappiness of the experience and in the summary of our conversation, I wrote:

> Things are sometimes overwhelming due to circumstances, not due to lack of skills or abilities on the part of Judy. Remember some issues are women's issues, management issues, company issues, etc., which can be handled but are often very difficult - it's not always a "Judy has no confidence" issue.
>
> Summative Evaluation
> April

Judy wrote in her own "Record of Achievement (a logbook issued by the government for these programs):"

> Closing off the course, many things have come to light. After talking to Lori, I feel so much better - realizing that these problems aren't just my "issues."
>
> Summative Evaluation
> April

This realization was important for Judy and helped her to deal with her feelings. In the end,

Judy wrote:

> Dreams - I've never dreamed
> before but I have goals now and
> a new feeling about me. I like
> having this control over my
> life.

Summative evaluation
April

Summary

All four of the research participants were very different women, and this difference is reflected in their observation of what the reentry program had meant to them, at that particular time of their lives. There are however, some common threads that run through all the stories. Most striking among these threads is the impact that being part of a group had on the women. For some, the impact was felt as surprise at finding other women had come from abusive backgrounds. For one woman the group provided a safe medium to reach out to others. In all cases, it seemed, in one way or another, to end a certain amount of isolation - physical and psychological.

What these women expected of their peers and what they eventually came to believe about the nature of group activity and support also varies from story to story. While some were keenly disappointed in the behaviour of some of their classmates, others came to see them as individuals within a certain context who shared a common group goal but were who, nonetheless, motivated and influenced by their own drives, ambitions, and fears.

In the next chapter, we will return to the earlier theme of empowerment. These women had been brought together as a group with similar interests and concerns. We now need to examine the other forces that were at work in the reentry program to try and determine how these women did or did not become empowered and how much of that empowerment might been contributable to belonging to a group.

Chapter VII

Empowering the Re-entry Woman

> "I had been there, on the edge,
> always afraid...Oh God, it's
> just me...and I got it from the
> group, I got support from other
> women."
>
> Participant's comments

The "it" to which this participant refers is that precipitating event or force that proves cataclysmic to the process of change. For some it can be as tangible as the threat of punishment or the promise of reward. For others, it may be a person who strikes at the heart of an issue with a seemingly innocent comment. Often, as in this case, it is no one thing but a combination of many factors that can be loosely sub-grouped under the heading "support." But what lay on the other side of the metaphorical cliff on which this woman stood? In the last chapter we examined the experience of the women as they reflected on their involvement in a reentry program, and we saw how that involvement had changed the way in which they viewed themselves and their relationships. Change, however, is often accompanied by some sense of loss (Marris, 1974) so the issue to be examined in this chapter is whether that loss was compensated for by a growth in personal power and if so what the source of that power was in relation to the women's experiences in the re-entry program.

Learning, Change and Loss

Learning and change are interdependent notions. To say that one has learned something is to assume that some change has taken place. The change may be felt in any combination of attitudes, skills or knowledge but the learner has in some ways, been transformed and is no longer the same person. Looking for evidence of change in behaviour is one of the only ways that educators can access the internal process of learning. One author describes the connection between change and learning in this way: "Change can be thought of as the process of using power or as the outcome of that process. Similarly, learning can be thought of as the process or outcome of change in response to experience (Mackeracher, 1982, p. A-1)."

It is a universal objective of educational activities to effect some type of learning experience. It is not enough, however, to establish a priori that because students have come together for an identified purpose, that change and thus learning has taken place. Moreover, a corollary of this optimistic view is often that not only has learning taken place, it has also been a "joyous experience in self-actualization (Brookfield, 1985, p. 44)." This view also presupposes that adults are always self-directed learners who simply need to have someone assist them in realizing their "half-perceived self-directedness (Brookfield, 1985, p. 44)." Anyone who entertains the notion that adults might be limited by their own experiences and might benefit from someone revealing to them, a wider range of possibilities, treads dangerous authoritarian ground (Brookfield, 1985). While it is true that learning and change can be an exhilarating experience, accepting change also means the re-working of powerful structures of meaning that enable us to interpret our world. Because this activity is often more painful than it is joyous, adults can and do resist change as a way of preserving order in what would otherwise be a chaotic existence. Further, this resistance is both a basic and necessary prerequisite of learning to survive:

> Resistance to change is, then, as fundamental as aspect of learning as revision, and adaptability comes as much from our ability to protect the assumptions of experience as on our willingness to reconsider them (Marris, p. 16, 1974).

Change of the magnitude that requires us to rethink or abandon our paradigms of meaning is similar, in Marris's view (1974), to the experience of losing a loved one through death. Both experiences have to do with loss and a period of mourning must follow that loss in order to integrate the change successfully in our present structures of meaning (Marris, 1974).

The women in this research had undergone changes of varying character and intensity and all the changes were not of the sort that in Marris's view provoke a "sense of bereavement." Learning new skills, for example, such as Kathy did at NAIT, expanded an already familiar world for her and did not involve any massive reorganization of the past for her to integrate these skills in her present routine (which she claims to have done quite successfully):

> I enjoyed NAIT. I think I learnt a lot watching the films for customer relations. Um, even when I'm in the restaurant and I'm serving, you know, serve from the right or serve from the left, whichever way that is (laughter) but when I'm doing it I can tell I'm doing it right.

In Carol's case, boredom and restlessness, two conditions that Marris identifies as the precursors of change which fulfil an already existing need, were partly behind the motivation which compelled Carol to seek out the re-entry program:

> I don't know if Lois felt this way, I felt that now that my kids were gone, where was my life going? What was I gong to do? That was the really big step for me. I thought I'm living alone and I can do what I want. Now what am I going to do?

While this change for Carol did involve some reorganization of her daily existence, it did not involve any significant sense of loss, although making a decision to participate or seek out an option was an important step for Carol. Carol had already worked through the loss of her children leaving home and she was primarily concerned with answering the question of what to do, now that the children were gone. These types of change are experienced as an "overwhelming revitalization of the meaning of life, not as bereavement (Marris, 1974, p. 148)."

Other changes that the women experienced involved a definite loss: a relationship, a value system, a change in their self concept. For Judy, learning to face challenges was partly a result of growing weary from the emotional drain of constant fear:

> I guess when I started the course I somehow feel that I had a whole different outlook then what everybody else did. I found a lot of people felt that everyone would have supervisor jobs or manager's jobs. And to me that wasn't even...that wasn't even in my focus at all. I just, I was just tired of being scared all the time, even if I didn't have a job now, I would still feel as good as I do now without the job.

However, Judy's efforts to give up that emotional home of the past produced changes in her that were even more frightening that the challenges of the past:

> I'm definitely not the same person and the scariest thing is about not being the same person is sometimes I go, "Oh God, where are those butterflies and it's like I take a moment to realize they're not there any more.

Lois, too, underwent a similar experience that was, in fact, a reversal of the loss of attachment. She saw the program as allowing her the opportunity to "open up" and learn to trust:

> My biggest step is just getting out and amongst people. I tend to be very homebody. Stay home and do what I have to do. But to go out and associate with a lot of people. I've never done that. I can't say I have a lot of close friends but I've made close friends since this course and that to me...like I've opened up to people.

In this way, she had to re-think her precious strategies with respect to self protection and give up specifically the strategy of erecting barriers to intimacy. For Lois, this reaching out to others seemed to be her biggest developmental task and she reflects often on the change that occurred as she began to recognize her importance to other:

> I enjoyed it...I enjoyed the closeness from all the women. I made some good friends and I found out that I'm a capable, able person. That's the biggest thing.

While these changes can both be construed as positive (so described by these women), they involved a sense of loss nonetheless. And part of the participants' resistance to the group and aspects of the program was symptomatic of their struggle with the conflict between past meanings and present desires and needs.

This conflict can also be seen in the words of these women when they talk about the impact of their participation in the program on their families and friends. Kathy's boyfriend, while supportive, felt somewhat resentful of Kathy's tenacity: "He's still amazed that I finished it," Kathy laughed, and goes on to talk about his ambivalence towards her new role as working mother: "I think he really likes it that I'm more independent now but in a way, it kind of takes me away from him so he doesn't"

Lois's friend tried to talk her out of continuing in the program for health reasons:

> Lois: I don't think I had so much a problem with my kids as with a, a friend of mine who was worried about my health and she was trying to dissuade me all the time. Like you know, "don't put yourself through it.
>
> Judy and Carol: This was a woman friend?
>
> Lois: Yeah, yeah. Like I'd turn around and I says like, "I'll show you," and I did. It was with the attitude I want to show her I could do it.

The conflict between Judy and her daughter, always a somewhat problematic relationship, escalated somewhat during the program as Judy felt that her daughter was using the program to manipulate Judy, primarily by making her feel guilty about her absence from home:

> I don't know. I had a little bit of cost. I don't know, I think I mentioned it...a little bit of pain dealing with my children. I'm sure you're all aware of what I went through, I said not this child and she doesn't appear for three weeks. And, "Oh, now you won't be home for lunch," you know?

All of these attachments were undergoing change and the women worked to integrate the old ways of interacting in their relationships with their new sense of purposefulness and independence.

It is imperative, Marris (1974) says, that loss be followed by a period of "at least a little" mourning. The staff knew that the women were undergoing significant changes but the concept of mourning was never considered. "I am frightened," one of them would say. "Yes," we would reply, "But that means your really living. Isn't that great?" In retrospect it seems clear now that, no, those changes might not have been particularly "joyous" experiences at times, no matter how zealously we sold them the concept. Further, many of the changes were pressed upon the women according to their perceived needs, structured by our own understanding of what one's existence should be. This speaks to the issue, touched on previously in the discussion of power, of who decides what changes are necessary and having done so, the limitations on how and to what extent those changes can be urged on others.

Power and Critical Reflection

To speak of empowering someone implies one of two things: a) I have access to power and I will share that access with you or b) I will help you to discover your own power. While both address the activity of change and learning, they are very different in nature and suggest different roles for the adult educator. The former orientations suggests that one lacks power as an individual and needs to be "taught" how to secure it. In the second sense, one recognizes that individuals possess powers that they are perhaps unaware of and the educator's role is thus to facilitate the emergence of this awareness. The difference between the two is in reality, the difference between prescribing and teaching to learning needs that are defined by experts and admitting that we are all experts on ourselves and therefore, must identify our own needs and the ways in which to satisfy them.

Marris (1974) talks about the danger of prescribing needs and forcing changes on those who have not been allowed the psychological space to reintegrate the old and the new:

> However reasonable the proposed changes, the process of implementing them must still allow the impulse of rejection to play itself out. When those who have power to manipulate changes act as if they have only to explain, and, when their explanations are not at once accepted, shrug off opposition as ignorance or prejudice, they express a profound contempt for the meaning of lives other than their own (p. 155).

This contempt further permits the adult educator to justify the changes on grounds that she knows best. This seems a relatively easy trap to fall into in the re-entry classroom because the differences between "us" and "they" seemed, at times, so profound. Because the staff had already achieved the objective of the program to which the other strived, namely participation in the labour market, it was difficult to not see ourselves as more successful and somewhat advanced, if not more superior, in our own personal development. Thus, changes that were defined as desirable and necessary often spoke to our experiences as successful employees. This is what Lovett (1985) must have meant by others becoming imprisoned by someone else's conception of their happiness. Marris expands on this further: "To be told the meaning of your life by others, in terms which are not yours

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An adult's experience, however, can become a prison of a different sort as "they become enclosed in their own self-histories (Brookfield, 1985, p. 48)." The assimilation and integration of our experiences which form the basis of our structures of meaning also prevent us from engaging in critical dialogue which challenges our assumptions about their world. In Brookfield's view critical reflection is the principle endeavour of adult education and one that ultimately leads to empowerment:

> The aim of adult education is the nurturing of self-directed, empowered adults: such adults will see themselves as proactive, initiating individuals engaged in a continuous re-creation of their personal relationships, work worlds, and social circumstances, and not as reactive individuals, buffeted by the uncontrollable forces of circumstance (p. 48).

Brookfield acknowledges the "confusion, uncertainty and ambiguity" that surrounds such activity but unlike, Marris, he does not seem to be suggesting that the conflict of change is as essential to learning as is the resolution of that conflict. In any event, Brookfield rejects the picture of the adult educator as having none other than a facilitative role and allows her to have some authority in formulating educational goals. This authority, however, is not based on "power over" the students but in a form of co-operation with them (Brookfield, 1985).

There was ample evidence of resistance to change on the part of the participants and it took many forms. Judy "hated" NAIT and continued to see little value in it:

> Well, we all know that I'm a NAIT hater. I'm sorry but I saw absolutely no use in it at all. Sort of put me back in the kitchen where I'd been fighting to get out all these year (laughter).

She also vigorously resisted, at times, any identification with the group. Lois's anger at Paul over an exercise that asked her to paraphrase group members seemed excessive given the innocent nature of the task but this incident is referred to often by Lois:

> The only thing I really didn't like and this still sticks with me is when we had to parrot each other. Remember that Judy? When we had to...we were sitting there and there was three of us and you had to parrot me? That irritated me beyond belief like I was really, really frustrated with that one. Like, I got really angry that day.

Lois did tell Peter about her discomfort with this exercise and in response to a question from Diane (the participant-observer for the group interview), Lois said that voicing her opinion would not have been possible before the program: "No, I would have just been mad." Kathy's resistance to change could be seen in her refusal to alter her physical appearance on advice from an expert and Carol, although seemingly open to all program activities, eventually quit her job; a final act of refusal to accommodate her change in status. While, according to Marris, this resistance is part of and not a preliminary step, to change, the question remains of whether some of this resistance might have been more productively dealt with if the staff had paid more attention to the companion issue of loss.

The entire class changed after the section on Supervision (including "Conflict Day") but their resistance was projected as intense dislike of the trainer:

> Judy: I found something that surprised me through the whole program was that a lot of people, a lot of the women had not a conflict, but with Peter...I never heard so much, at the end of the day, "Oh, I hate that Peter. Oh, I hate that Peter."
>
> Researcher: Why do you think that was?
>
> Judy: I don't know but I sure heard it a lot.
>
> Researcher: Do you think that would have bothered Peter if he'd known that?
>
> Judy: I really don't think he could have gave a ....(laughs).

Judy was aware of Peter's agenda and so remained aloof from the group in this respect. Carol, as well, knowingly pronounced Peter as "very good at what he does." In the end, though, they all agreed he was composed of "too much fact and not enough emotion." Judy claimed that it would be virtually impossible for him to have a clear understanding of the issues that affected them and Carol agreed:

> I don't think he totally understood. I think it was impossible for him to understand the problems that women were going through.

However, to the extent that Peter was able to affect the sorts of changes that he felt necessary, says something important about the participants' ultimate compliance with authority. They may not have liked it, but they went along with it. Under Peter's tutelage, the women were probably resisting both the changes that were the intended outcome of the activities as well as the authority that legitimized the need for those changes.

Received Knowledge

The women in this study relied on authority figures to tell them what to do as well as seeing them as the primary source of knowledge. This knowledge extended beyond the psychomotor domain to include affective change and the data is sprinkled throughout with the phrase, "You taught us..." or "We learned..." Some of that is attributable, no doubt, to the common language they used to talk about school related activities and was in all likelihood influenced by their school experiences as children and teens. The participants "received" knowledge about themselves, their roles, and their personal development in the program. This is an epistemological position described by Belenky, et at (1986) as "Received Knowledge." Women, at this stage, think of "words as central to the knowing process. They learn from listening (p. 37)." This description is especially apt for Carol who embarked upon each new course component with the hope that "we would really get into it." While the participants were intimidated by the authority represented by Peter and Maria, they were not intimidated by me because "I didn't talk about myself:" Carol said:

> You didn't talk about your life, though, and say what you'd done. You were instructing us how to be more assertive and be...feel better as women. So you didn't really dwell on your part of it as much, right? You weren't up there saying you had to do this and you had done that. You didn't do that as much. That wasn't your role...your role was to help us feel better as women.

Women at this stage see the truth as something existing outside themselves and imparted to them by experts. Further, because this knowledge originated elsewhere, they are dependent on others for their own self-knowledge (Belenky, 1986). This was true for the participants who focused initially (and to a certain extent continually) on questions such as "What will they think of me?" and "How do others see me?" Truth exists and is not open to debate or critical analysis and typically the truth belongs only to experts and is not located in the everyday experience of ordinary friends.

"The received knowers, " Belenky claims, "are frequently surprised and relieved to hear others saying the very same things that they would say (p. 37):

> Judy: My biggest surprise was that you had this group of women together that were all...like I just didn't realize that there were so many women fighting for the same thing and that they could actually feel like I did...like I talk a lot about (guest speaker) and the biggest thing in my head is her sitting there saying, "Well, like I'm sitting in this room and someone' going to say like what are you doing here? Like, get out." And like everybody felt like that and it was just the biggest surprise and it really helped me get through it.

This revelation not only ended isolation for some of the participants but was the foundation upon which they built their confidence in being able to construct their own meanings. Hearing their experience echoed in another woman's words opened the participants up to the value of their own experience and fostered relationships of "mutuality and reciprocity that are most helpful in eventually enabling them to disentangle their own voices from the voices of others (Belenky, et at, 1986, p. 38)." By program's end, Carol's view of her own experience as a mother and housewife had changed perceptively and she now saw the value of these roles as informing her own sense of worth:

> I think like sometimes we feel like we're failures because we're only housewives or...or because of our marriages. Sometimes you feel like you've failed, you know? And then going out in the workforce and stuff and starting all over. Like what can you do? If you don't have a sense of self-worth because you've only been a housewife and forget that you've done all these things and raised children and then you come...and your marriage didn't work and I felt like kind of a failure and I found that everybody felt the same way...well a lot of people had been through the same thing. And, and you found out you do have skills, you know, you're not...it all boils down to the self-image thing. That's why it helped so much. Being a housewife and a mother and raising children is really important and you do learn lots of things. If you've done a good job at that, its really an accomplishment. You know, "Oh, I'm just a housewife." Well, that's really an accomplishment.

The process of this disentanglement can be traced from the Life skills component at the beginning of the program where they first discovered a common voice to Supervision, where they began to speak alone.

Speaking alone, though, often brings with it the conflict between following one's own heart and deferring one's wishes to others. The latter had been the experience of the women preceding the course, especially with respect to their families. At that time, choosing between self and others seemed untenable for if they were to develop their own powers, it would necessarily be at the expense of others; an "either or" proposition (Belenky, et at, 1986). Women, in the received knowledge stage, make the important discovery that it is through the empowerment of others that they develop their own strengths and it is the "act of giving rather than receiving that leads them to a greater sense of their capacity for knowing and loving (Belenky, 1986, p. 47)." Lois's efforts to give of her time and counselling expertise was instrumental to her accepting herself as a "capable" person. In this way, the dual activities of caring for oneself and caring for others do not seem incompatible. Many of the participants expressed this sense of finally having the opportunity to think of themselves and follow their own desires and wants while preserving their important connections with their families.. Often, they said, "It's my turn," after having lived a life for children which precluded them from living a life for themselves. For two of the participants, problems with their children were not allowed to interfere with their own determination to finish the program and in fact, Judy was quite honest with her daughter about the reciprocal nature of their relationship:

> You know, I sort of changed the whole time I was going through school. Like I was focusing all this attention, all this negative attention and it got to the point...I said, "Whoa, you do this but this is how I feel and this is how I'm reacting and this is what you're doing to me."

For Judy this new found assertiveness which suggested to her that her feelings were as valuable as her daughter's and that her daughter needed to understand that if their relationship was to grow. Carol had a similar experience with her son who began to experiment with drugs:

> Yeah, I went through a little bit of trouble with one of them but like Judy said, "It's my time. It's my turn to something for me."
>
> Kathy: You know, I was thinking something about that, Lois, he sort of went through something that was really out of character for him. I'm just happy that (boys' names) are too young yet to worry about that.
>
> Yeah, like I said, I told him it was my turn. If he wanted to act that way then you know, he could leave.

This was extremely disturbing to Carol but she did not allow her son's actions to deter her from participating in the program. "I've raised you all these years," she told them. "Now it's my turn."

The program had various effects on the participants' families but in all cases the connection to others remained an essential consideration for these women. Miller (1986) sees this as a powerful strength of women who, in their quest for autonomy and independence, continue to value their places in the community and their homes. They work to achieve a symbiotic relationship with those around them and use their skills as nurturers and mothers to share what they have learned about their own power with others. As Kathy began to have a sense of her own positive impact on co-workers and classmates, the physical barriers of her home became at once, more permeable as she brought home the importance of her role as worker and brought to class, her skills as a mother and mate:

> Like I take pride in doing, you know, good suppers and making lunch and things like that. And having a clean house but I feel better being out and working rather than always at home with the kids and dragged out.

The participants, as a group, had the opportunity to listen to others and learn from the sharing of experiences and problems and as they found their own perspectives valued so their confidence in themselves as creators of knowledge began to grow.

Each of the participants was unique with respect to the particular issues they had been dealing with before the program began and so each related differently to the conversations of others in the group. What had a great deal of resonance for one woman was barely heard by another. What did strike a responsive chord in all, though, was their growing awareness of what was common to the lives and experiences of all women. As Judy said, "It doesn't matter how many years of University you have, you still have to bring up your children," and Kathy added:

> I was thinking things like well, there's sure a different variety of us there and those girls like Diane and Margo and hearing some of them...It was almost like we were all going through almost the same things. You know, everybody had their own set of problems and reasons and...I don't know, it was really strange at first.

This was a powerful realization for the women as they gained increasing exposure during the program to a wide variety of women in very different circumstances. They felt that for once, the finger of blame was not pointed at them but in a more general direction at the attitudes and barriers that existed outside the classroom walls. Moreover, they began to get a sense of the bigger picture and the effects, over the long term, of sexual and physical assault on all women:

> Judy: I seen a lot...I seen a lot of women that had similar sort of backgrounds as me sort of whether it be abuse or whatever and its just...I don't know, I seen the outcome exactly what the outcome with me. Here's someone with no self-confidence. For years I felt okay, "Sure, abuse me. I'm a woman. Who else is supposed to abuse me." Like, I don't know, maybe I shouldn't be saying these things but I felt really strongly that there was a lot of common things like that. The outcome was stay home, stay on welfare. You have no confidence. You can't do anything. I always felt like a victim and there's all kinds out there.

Removing the burden of guilt from their own shoulders freed them to pursue other needs and interests and allowed them, as many pointed out for the first time, to become friends with themselves. For Carol, this was pivotal to her success in the program: "It all boils down to if I like myself and I feel I'm capable, I can do it but I have to feel that way about myself first." They described this as the first step in achieving a sense of independence which they described as ultimately, a singular journey. However, all agreed that they could not have undertaken such a journey without the supportive structures of the group.

Summary

In this chapter, some of the common threads that run through the women's stories have been expanded on and looked at in terms of some of the relevant literature on change and loss, critical reflection and women's epistemology.

The goal of education is to facilitate learning but learning implies change and change can often mean loss. In view of the difficult task these women faced in re-structuring their ways of interpreting the world, some of the conflict they felt and the resistance they showed seems clearly understandable. The staff, however, was largely unaware of this aspect of learning, at least on a conscious level, and many of the classroom activities designed for affective change, were decided on by the staff as necessary to the learning process. This raises some questions with respect to the role trainers play as agents of change.

Received knowledge was seen as an important concept as the participants, for the most part, regarded the trainers as the experts. The women received knowledge in areas ranging from skills such as first aid to affective areas such as self-esteem. Women in this position often make the surprising and happy discovery that others share their experiences. Through this mutual discovery, women can begin to value their own experiences as contributing to the learning process. The women also gained a greater awareness of the struggles that face all women, releasing them, in part, from the burden of guilt and self-blame associated with their perceived short-comings. In the end they all agreed that independence was a goal that had to ultimately be achieved on an individual basis but they also agreed that the first step towards this goal would have been difficult if not impossible without the support of the group. It is to this notion of group development and concurrently, the experiences of individuals within a group that we know turn. The question to be addressed in the next section is whether there was anything about the experience with the group from the women's point of view, which cannot be strictly accounted for by group development theory. In other words, is there anything that sets this group of women apart from other groups or the way we expect other groups to progress?

Stages of Group Development - The View From the Literature

While it is true that the entire group of women who participated in the CJS program was composed of individuals, as is any group, the group soon came to mean more than the sum of its parts. Individuals within a group become altered as the group evolves and in turn, they alter the composition of the group (Jones, 1984). Groups, however they are put together, exert powerful influences on their members (Jones, 1984). As the individual reacts to those changes, the group itself is progressing through identifiable stages, characterized by different issues and tasks. These stages of group development have been summarized by Tuckman (in Faye and Doyle, 1982), and are presented below as a starting point from which a discussion of the development of this particular group can evolve.

Stage One = Form

In this stage group member attempt to work out the ambiguities of the new situation and discover what behaviours are expected. Typical questions during this phase are, "What is my role in this group?" "How will I fit in?" The primary need of group members at this point is to structure their environment and this structure must be in place before they are ready to engage in the task at hand (Faye and Doyle, 1982). At this stage, group members are also making the transition from individual to member status and are hesitant about participating as they deal with feelings of fear and anxiety about the new situation (Faye and Doyle, 1982). Because new group members depend on authority at this stage, research as shown that a directive and involved style of leadership is most effective (Carew, Carew and Blanchard, 1986). If the leader's style is too personal or supportive, the group can form unrealistic expectations which leads to greater disappointment during the next stage of development (Carew, Carew and Blanchard, 1986).

Stage Two - Storm

In this stage, group members "become hostile or overzealous as a way to express their individuality and resist group formation (Faye and Doyle, 1982, p. 125)." They now have a sense of the dimensions of the task ahead of them and "respond emotionally to the requirements for self-change and self-denial (Faye and Doyle, 1982, p. 125). Often, cliques within the group form or the group becomes divided into separate and opposing camps on certain issues. The effective leader during this stage, recognizes that the conflict in the group is not reflective of classroom mismanagement and is an important step in the development of group norms (Carew, Carew and Blanchard, 1986). From Marris's (1974) point of view, this conflict is also part of the individual's struggle with change. The leader thus must exhibit high levels of both supportive and directive behaviour and most importantly, acknowledge the group's emotions as valid (Carew, Carew and Blanchard, 1986). By not doing so, the conflict moves to a less overt level and the group will be possibly prevented from any more growth in a healthy direction.

Stage Three - Norm; Stage Four - Perform

The group members at stage 3 are accepting of one another's idiosyncrasies and according to the literature, open themselves to intimacy within the group (Faye and Doyle, 1982). Group members begin to share confidences and problems and learn how to "express emotions constructively (Faye and Doyle, 1982, p. 126)." During this stage and the final stage of performing, conflict is avoided in order to maintain harmony, and a great deal of work is usually accomplished. Members of the group come to understand the process of their involvement and are able to engage in "constructive self-change (Faye and Doyle, 1984). Effective leadership at this point in the group's development is both low in directedness and high in support (Carew, Carew and Blanchard, 1986).

So it can be seen that groups start out as individual members, seeking out their roles and questioning the wisdom of their decision to join the group. If the group develops in a healthy way, the members next pass through a stage of conflict where they attempt to assert themselves and establish group norms of behaviour. This working through of group conflict eventually leads to the last two stages, norming and performing, where group members accept the differences amongst them and re-focus their efforts on group tasks and goals. At these stages, as well, group members are much more likely to engage in self-disclosure and constructive self-change. Predictably enough, not all groups advance through all the stages and the time spent at each stage depends on the composition of the group, the group tasks and the group leader. The latter variable is seen by the project staff as pivotal to the direction in which the group develops.

The Staff Perspective on Group Development

Peter (assistant program coordinator and trainer), who led the supervision section which included "conflict day," saw the group of reentry women as starting out in the norming stage (as all groups do) and essentially staying there. When asked about "conflict day," Peter saw smaller sub-groups perhaps, moving to the storming stage but this was not the experience of the group members as a whole. "Conflict day" may have been part of that stage but it was not participated in by the bigger group and was really a dialogue between Judy and two or three other women. Peter believed that day may have brought some women "to the brink" but most were simply not ready to move on. Part of this can be explained, Peter said, by the behaviour norms the group had established up to that point, one of which was to avoid conflict.

Maria (program coordinator) agreed in part with Peter and identified four or five women who had developed further as individuals. This sub-group included Carol, Lois, and Judy, but not Kathy. There was an outward change in this smaller group, Maria observed, and they could have been utilized as "good examples of program participants." This sub-group bonded, Maria said, as a result of them being at similar developmental stages, and they stood in direct contrast to the other larger sub-group in the class who Maria described as "tougher, hard-core, and street-smart."

Both Maria and Peter agreed that many groups did not venture into the storming stage and Peter thought that in the hands of a skilled trainer, they could have been brought to this point. Maria and Peter differed, however, on the distinction between manipulation and facilitation in terms of how a skilled trainer may have approached this particular group. Peter believes that all trainers are at least "a bit" manipulative and that manipulation is sometimes called for. Maria disagreed and argued that manipulation tends to make people think they have been used while facilitation helps them to say something they would have wanted to say.

This was an extremely interesting point of digression for Peter and Maria in light of Judy's insight into Peter's behaviour on conflict day: "He egged me and egged me until I just couldn't stand it any more." When asked if she resented that or felt manipulated, Judy replied, "no." However, Judy is also the woman Maria used in her example to contrast manipulative and facilitative behaviour. During a TPH visit, Maria began to guide Judy through the conversation and soon realized, "I could get her to say anything I wanted her to say. I quickly realized that and switched to a facilitative role." Maria believes that the distinction between these two trainer approaches is an important one to maintain, especially in a reentry context where the staff generally hold the "purse strings," and the women are in many ways, dependent on them. Peter disagreed about the role of the trainer, as Maria described it, and suggested that there was a hazy distinction between facilitation and abdication. While Judy may have felt manipulated on "conflict day," Peter described himself as facilitative. In the end, both Peter and Maria felt that the behaviour of the group leader was undeniably a critical determining factor in the development of the group.

Whether or not the group moved on to the norming and forming stages, Maria felt that graduation day held some clues to this particular group and that something had been left unsaid about the occasion. She really felt the strength of the group that day and it was a very satisfying moment for her. Somehow, irrespective of their differences, the group came together in a very "tight and cohesive way," and Maria felt both the sense of an ending and a beginning. By objective criteria, some of the women had not been successful (were not employed) but they still felt a part of the group that day and a high degree of bonding amongst the women was clearly evident. If the group had completed the program, Maria wondered, without progressing past the storming stage, what could account for them being such a strong group at the end?

Peter responded to this query by theorizing that graduation was not only a special event but a final one. In view of this fact, the women rejected the storming stage, perhaps sub-consciously. Maria did not agree with Peter, pointing out that the women "basically didn't do anything they didn't want to do." They were clearly there for each other, "howling" for each other and everybody was afforded the same enthusiastic support. Maria returned to her earlier hypothesis that the group had perhaps embarked on a new cycle. Peter remained convinced that had the women not known graduation was their last time together, there would not have been that bonding.

Maria believes that groups are no more than the individuals that form them, and the CJS programs, in particular, seem to give rise to relatively unstable groups. Peter agreed that this particular group had not been constant and pointed out that group developmental theory suggests that any change in an individual translated to a change in the group. It was this inconsistency in the group that was responsible for the group not moving beyond forming. Peter reiterated again that any group cohesiveness observed on graduation day was not the result of the group developing significantly but was more a case of mutual feelings accomplishment and pride, combined with a touch of nostalgia.

Summary

The project staff could not reach agreement on whether the women in this CJS program ever moved beyond the forming stage. While Peter remained convinced that they did not, Maria saw graduation day as being illustrative of something important in terms of the group's development. She believed that the strong sense of bonding that was felt by all that day, suggested a new beginning for the group which she claimed, was an entity of its own, following its own course of development. Maria, it can be assumed, did not feel that group development theory accounted for what she observed taking placed within this particular program. Both Maria and

Peter agreed on the important role the trainer plays in any group's development but the facilitative or manipulative nature of that leadership remained a contentious issue for them. The final source utilized to study the nature of this group is the women themselves.

Group Development - The View From the Women

Stage one of group development theory, forming, can be identified in the participant's reflections on their first few days:

> Kathy: I wasn't sure, you know. I had mixed feelings. Is this what I want to be...or what I want to do? I was kind of scared, you know.
>
> Judy: You know, when I started that course, I wouldn't have said s... if my mouth was full of it.
>
> Carol: I looked around and I thought, "Oh, everyone's so young. I didn't know how I was going to fit in and then I saw Eva and some others..."
>
> Lois: When I first started that course, I had no confidence whatsoever. Did I talk to anybody (laughs)?

They wondered if others would accept them and were convinced that many had more confidence and abilities than themselves. Judy, Lois and Kathy all asked themselves, "What am I doing here?" As well, Judy and Lois were determined not to say anything under any circumstances. My role at the time was quite directive as I structured the day around specific learning activities. It is also interesting to note, however, that I was described as being very open, responsive and non-threatening in the class evaluation of the life skills section, characteristics identified as not appropriate to the forming stage. This, in fact, turned out to be true and on one particularly difficult day, TPH positions were posted that were not the supervisory positions the women were expecting. They were disillusioned and angry with me and the research participants still talk about this incident in the context of what parts of the program need to be improved:

> Kathy: Well, I think that they...that their expectations shouldn't be so high or led to believe so high. I don't know why but we all thought a lot higher than what...I think maybe because it said supervisory positions and not all of them were supervisory positions.

The second stage or storming, seems parallelled in part by the women's increasing amount of time spent in the public as a group. NAIT in particular was a difficult time although Lois, Carol and Kathy all enjoyed the experience. Judy hated NAIT, saw no use in it and resented being "put back in the kitchen" which was exactly what she was working to liberate herself from. Judy confesses that at this time, she was trying to sort out her ambivalent feelings towards the group. It took her some time, she said, before she realized she "didn't have to like everyone." Judy, Lois and Carol all expressed disappointment in the group and saw their behaviour as consistently different. Only Kathy seemed unperturbed by the actions of others:

> It [group's behaviour at NAIT] didn't really bug me or nothing like that. If I would have thought like some of the girls or let [other participant] influence me, I'm sure it would have brought down how I felt but I was just too high on the class (laughter).

All the women, as well, were also dealing with the transition to their TPH which exacerbated feelings of hostility and uncertainty. Further, since the group was now travelling back and forth between TPH, classroom and NAIT, this second stage seemed to have no definite beginning or end point as the opportunities to deal and resolve group conflict were not readily available. The women simply took the conflict back with them to their TPH.

"Conflict Day" which has already received numerous mention was a significant event for the participants who saw the discussion that day as having observable effects on the atmosphere of the group. This was the most concentrated attempt on the part of the staff to deal with conflict that was by then, very obvious and destined to have deleterious effects on the group unless addressed.

Stage three and four are problematic for the group in this research. Sharing intimacies was characteristic of the behaviour of the group during stage 1 which, according to the theory, is not behaviour typically present until stage 2, and this sharing continued to be a group attribute during the course of the program. As well, conflict of the sort that occurs among group members was not a dominant theme in the information provided by the participants other than that conflict which was expressed as disappointment in the group behaviour. Even "Conflict Day" was essentially a dialogue between Judy and two or three other women. Carol was plainly disgusted by the whole exercise which she likened to the activity one finds in a "kindergarten class" or "psychiatric group." Kathy was very upset by the disruption in group harmony.

One of the reasons that might possibly account for the lack of conflict among the women was because as a group of women, conflict was an alien form of expression to them and consequently, very threatening (Miller, 1986). Women have been the mediators, referees and arbitrators in relationships and thus, have not had the opportunity to learn that conflict is a necessary and positive aspect of change. Miller says, "As women seek self-definition and self-determination, they will, perforce, illuminate, on a broad new scale, the existence of conflict as a basic process of existence (p. 126)." Conflict, in relation to this group's experience, did not seem to occur as a discrete part of a particular stage but was both on-going in the participant's personal development and a function of their experiences in a group of women.

It is also important to note that this model of group development is linear (while allowing for variation in group response and regression). The possibility exists that the group of women in this research, evolved in a more circular sense with each conflict bringing with it, more efficacy and thus greater independence from the group and a greater sense of individual power. As well, the nature of this group's task was primarily concerned with affective change and so conflict was central to the on-going task rather than a step in the process that needed to be resolved and once that was done, left behind. A more valid approach to looking at the women's experience of belonging to this group might be to look at the literature which is not so much concerned with the development of an entire group, but how individuals develop within a group as a result of certain growth processes.

Growth Processes in Groups

Jones (1984) has identified five major growth processes that can be found in most groups. These processes are closely connected to the dominant themes of the participant's observations and therefore warrant a closer look. Unlike the stages of group development, growth processes do not develop in a linear fashion but interact continuously with each other. This interaction, in Jones' words, is "what accounts for much of the immense potency of social intercourse for shaping the behaviour of individuals (p. 128)." In addition, rather than focusing on the changes of the group as a whole, group effectiveness is seen as possible only when what happens in the group can be related to the individual. Thus, the experiences of the individual are never sacrificed for the sake of identifying what stage the group is or should be at.

Self-assessment is the first process of note for Jones as the "core of personal learning is looking clearly at oneself." Humans, Jones contends, are remarkable for the extent to which they can be self-deceiving. We understand who we are by what others have told us we are and the perception of others, most notably in our formative years, largely informs our self-concept. This is one of the more enduring structure of meaning that Marris (1974) refers to and the most resistant to change. In times of threat, we tend to cling tenaciously to our self-concepts but in an atmosphere of trust, we relax our grip on that structure and open ourselves up to change (Jones, 1984). However this change is also dependent on other processes that we engage in with people around us. During this interaction, we collect new data about ourselves and integrate this data into our existing structures.

One of the ways in which we do this is through the process of self-disclosure. Again, the extent to which we are operating in a climate of trust determines the form and extent of our self-disclosure. However, a group whose members are always competing to tell their story will not be a group whose members are getting to know themselves.

There must also be the opportunity to receive and give feedback which facilitates the process of finding out about oneself from the perceptions of others. Feedback can be either constructive or destructive depending on the roles of the sender and receiver and the context in which it is given, and when one seeks out feedback, their self-concept is most vulnerable to influence and change. Self-disclosure, self-assessment and feedback, however, provide only part of the picture of self. Some areas will remain unknown to both self and others unless a person is willing to engage in risk taking.

Trying on new behaviours or seeking out challenges can be revealing to both the risk-taker and the group. It can also expose certain features of one's self-concept that no longer seem to hold true or are counter-productive to the ways in which one wishes to understand oneself (Jones, 1984). For example, a woman who has always viewed herself as passive may risk assertively voicing an opinion in class. The reaction to that particular risk by the rest of the group will tell her if the risk has been worth taking. The final growth process then, is consensual validation which is the process of receiving feedback which is consistent across the group. If an incident of risk-taking behaviour is applauded by one group member then the risk-taker will be uncertain as to the message. If everyone applauds, one can safely assume that the new behaviour is worth adding to one's repertoire (Jones, 1984).

These processes can be seen as underpinning many of the participants' experiences in the program. The Life skills component of the program, where the participants were initially introduced to the concept of self-assessment, is mentioned as the activity which "got the whole thing going." For the women, self-assessment extended beyond the "feel good about yourself" theme of self-esteem. As Lois put it, "it's not just...liking yourself but getting to know yourself." , not, in her view, the same activity at all. Getting to know oneself, for these women, led to getting to know what their own particular strengths were, and as they flexed these new muscles and waited for the group reaction, they began to establish themselves as both unique individuals and valuable group members. Lois repeatedly asserts, "I realized that I am a capable person." She knows this because as she risked herself in the group, the group responded to her by seeking her out for help and advice. Moreover, armed with this new self-knowledge, the participants felt they could set and reach goals which they had previously felt incapable of doing.

The combined outcome of these growth processes for these women was improved self-esteem and new feelings of self worth which they saw as critical to their abilities to act in their own interests. Their self-worth, however, was no longer strictly tied up in what they presented physically to the world. As Judy said about one classroom activity which dealt with dressing successfully in the work world:

> It got to the point where she was coming around the room and I'm going, "Oh God, please don't tell me my hips are the wrong size as if it makes any difference at this point when I'm going to work and my hips are the same size as my shoulders.

Self-esteem was taking on a new meaning for these women and they could see it located in not only their hips sizes or hair length but in their capabilities as women handling various roles. This, for the research participants was what it meant to have power.

Summary and Conclusions

In attempting to answer the original question posed by this research, it seemed likely that the form of the response would be something like "this and that" empowered the participants and "this and that" did not. However, the answer is more complex than that which lends itself to singling out activities. It would be easy to list the activities that the participants liked and didn't like but given what we know of change and conflict, it seems unlikely that this approach would yield a meaningful answer. What often agitated the participants the most was at the same time their most significant learning experience. If the program objectives were equatable with empowerment, than clearly Carol was not empowered (this should not be taken to speak against this possibility). How then to approach the question of empowerment for these women?

The answer depends, to a large extent, on how the participants defined power and is further enlightened by the earlier discussion on women's relationship to power. What power amounts to depends on what you want and what resources you have to obtain intended outcomes. Despite the apparent subjectivity of this definition, however, one needs at least, the resources to establish some measure of positive freedom. Without the positive freedom to act, it is impossible to start talking about any fruitful notion of a desirable outcome or situation.

Because economic independence seems clearly necessary to positive freedom, it remains an crucial focal point for the empowerment of women. This particular reentry program failed to meet the objectives of what this obvious focus is but despite this apparent failure, the participants continued to discuss the notion of personal power, making reference to its positive relationship to the program. Evidently for these women, empowerment had more to do with understanding their obstacles than with the provision of resources.

Although, the participants' answers to the directly posed question of what power meant to them reflected the uniqueness of their experiences, a sense of being independent was preserved throughout all the responses. For them, having power simply meant being able to do the things that they discovered they wanted to do. There was also a need, however, to explore this independence within the context of their important personal relationships. The ways in which they came to discover their power, seemed, they generally agreed, to rest upon their experiences as women coming together in a group; a theme discussed in previous chapters. While the final independent step had to be taken alone, they said, it was experiencing the camaraderie and support of the group that made the first tentative steps possible.

Every group is unique and this one is of course, no exception. These participants to greater or lesser degrees had experienced pain, abuse, betrayal and times in which they felt both isolated and worthless. What seemed to stand out boldly on the pages of transcription was the claim, "I thought it was only me." Finding other women who shared some of their histories was a source of both liberation and disappointment as they saw that the other women still needed to relate to the world on their own terms, despite the commonalities of their experiences.

What impact the program activities and components had on the empowerment of these women cannot be confidently described. Even though Life skills and Supervision received a great deal of mention, they were also the first and last activity in the program and they both utilized intensive classroom training to try and bring about affective change. Life skills, especially, took place in the first three weeks of the program and was designed specifically to address self-assessment, self-esteem, women's roles and assertiveness. There is no reason to believe, at this point, that the women would not have talked to each other under different class circumstances, and they might have made the same startling discoveries among themselves.

The likelihood of this happening, however, seems more remote in a carpentry classroom at NAIT than in a program which is designed to meet the specific learning needs of women. Apart from the fact that these women were encouraged to critically reflect on their pasts and share their insights with others, the structure of the reentry program lent institutional legitimacy to this activity. Further, having someone with institutional authority like myself, positively rewarding the woman who shared some personal discovery with her peers, sent a clear message to the others with respect to how well received their own personal reflections would be.

Time is another intervening factor. The act of joining a re-entry program indicates the presence of some need for change so it seems reasonable to state that the program became yet another, albeit highly organized and structured, vehicle for change. It may have simply extended a process in a group which had already been initiated by the individuals. Judy, for example, talks about her own changing feelings, ten years before she would participate in a re-entry program. Judy, Kathy and Carol, as well, mention maturity as an important influence on their personal growth. It is impossible to say at what stage of personal development the program caught theses women so it is equally dangerous to predict how great a part the program had in the development of any subsequent stages.

The one woman who remains an anomaly is Carol who quit her job soon after leaving the program. While Carol claims that she was the victim of unmanageable circumstances, the researcher is tempted to argue such a claim. Clearly, the program did not provide Carol with the means to cope successfully with her work environment and because Carol wanted badly to work, it could be said that the program failed to help Carol achieve her goals; for Carol this is what empowerment means. What is unclear is whether this is a dependency issue for Carol and what the program could have done to lessen her dependency on the group and trainers.

To answer the question, then, the empowering aspect of the re-entry program for these women was their participation in a group composed of women who were dealing with similar issues. It was through this association that these participants found their voice, learned to put a name to their feelings and to act assertively on their own behalf. And as they told me, they couldn't have done it without the group:

> Judy:
> I know that I had to do it myself but definitely within a group of women with similar problems, similar...not even necessarily even similar backgrounds and I realized that you had the same things as women, we have a lot of similar things. I think I came out of it with more than I thought I ever would. I had moments of anger, moments of frustration, moments of wanting to quit but as a group, as a group of women, I got a lot of support, a lot of knowledge.
>
> Kathy
> I'm not so down all the time and I really enjoyed being out there working all the time because, like I say, I'm not sitting at home all the time any more...in the beginning I thought, "Geez, is this what I want to do?" but everyone was, uh, I think everyone made friends right away. Everybody was really great. I thought they were great...right from the beginning.
>
> Lois
> I was really introverted. And that course helped me to come out. I know that I can do it. I know I have a much right as the next person to do it. And I'm just as capable as they are. I got a lot out of the course. I enjoyed the closeness from all the women. Now I know I'm a capable, able person and that's the best thing.

> Carol
> I got a lot out of it. I have more self-confidence. I feel that I can go ahead and do these things...you look around at first and you think everyone has more confidence than you but that's not the way it was. Everybody was in the same boat. We're all moving forward now in a positive direction.

Recommendations

Although this research has been descriptive in nature, its value partially lay in illuminating some aspects of reentry programs that merit further attention in terms of planning and research. As well, looking at the research process retrospectively, some issues and challenges come to mind that also deserve a closer look. This section then, is intended to make some recommendations with respect to: a) reentry programs and b) research of the nature represented by this thesis.

Reentry programs are influential forums within which change can be affected. Despite the focus on the hospitality industry which characterized this particular program (and many others like it), the women who participated in this research still saw the program as a powerful vehicle for change. Part of this, we have seen, has to do with the opportunity for women in similar circumstances to come together in an environment which accepts and legitimizes their experiences. However, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that these women also strove towards some notion of economic independence. Reentry programs must address this goal by targeting occupations which offer some hope of financial security, especially for female headed families. This will involve a creative approach to the ways in which programs are conceived and particularly, the ways in which the planners conceptualize a working world for women. Although the issue of daycare has not been extensively discussed in this study, until women are able to share the burden of childcare with the state and within the structures of their own families, their full employment potential with likely never be realized.

Securing high quality training positions, however, does not guarantee successful home to work transitions. Much depends on the quality of training women receive both on and off-site. Women are a special educational case and as such, they deserve training which takes their special learning needs into account. Trainers should have specific instruction, at the very least, in the field of adult education with preferably a specific focus on women's learning styles.

The above discussion points to a fruitful area of research that may could have a direct and positive impact on women's reentry programs: women's epistomology. How do women learn and what are the best ways to go about the important task of teaching them? While this field is receiving increasing attention, the reentry classroom with its mix of on and off-site training, would be an interesting context in which to explore the learning needs of women. This is especially true as the women in reentry programs are often returning to school and work after a prolonged absence.

Another interesting area which was briefly touched on in the individual interviews but not explored at any great depth, is the question of how home to work transitions can be more effectively facilitated by reentry program structures. Of special interest is the perceptual shift required of women who may be forced by circumstances to reenter the workforce. Further research in this area may help to sensitize staff to potential problems of either an attitudinal or systemic nature and thus allow them to better plan for effective intervention at certain critical junctures.

Turning now to the research process itself, one of the primary challenges for this researcher was acquiring meaningful information from the women. While the interview process seemed best suited to this intent, the interviews were long and somewhat cumbersome to work with. After reviewing the interviews, it was found that some important questions had been omitted and too much time had been spent on unrelated issues. While a ten minute digression on a son's eating habits may, on the face of it, seem harmless and perhaps even important for the development of rapport, those ten minutes added considerably to the bulk of the transcript without adding clarity to the topic. For future research of this nature, more care should be taken to focus the interview on what the researcher wishes to find out while avoiding the straightjacket of too much structure.

The other point that needs to be discussed is the collaborative intent of this research which was not fully realized. While the participants were kept abreast of the development of the research, they did not see anything written until the end of the process. Part of this had to do with difficulty in maintaining contact with them over time and distance so a solution may be to pre-arrange meetings with the participants on a consistent basis. When the participants did have the opportunity to read what had been written, they were presented with a considerable amount of writing, much of which was theoretical and perhaps difficult for them to comprehend. It was also a great deal of information to digest and the quality of their responses to the summary and conclusions may have been improved had they had more time to reflect and ask questions.

The participants did have the opportunity to respond to this research and the final section of this thesis is composed of their thoughts on the program and their stories as outlined in Chapters VI and VII.

The Final Word

The final word in this research belongs to the participants: Lois, Kathy, Carol and Judy. It was they who experienced the reentry program and it is they who know the program best. While this research attempted to be faithful to their words and their feelings, no one is in a better position to talk about the kind of impact the reentry program had on them, than the participants themselves. They have seen this research through to the end and remained committed to the goals of the research from the start. Without allowing them the chance to respond to the interpretations and conclusions in this work, the research would have seemed less complete, and thus less credible.

All four participants responded to what was written here in different ways. Kathy preferred to respond verbally as I read and paraphrased what I had written about her. Carol went through the text, making corrections where ever they seemed warranted and wrote a brief summation of her thoughts. Judy was quite moved by what she read, she told me, and wrote about her feelings. Lois responded in a similar fashion to Judy. Their final words, thoughts, and feelings have been reproduced as accurately as can be managed. Their words will close the cover on this thesis.

Lois

After reading Chapter VI, I find that most of the observations about myself are correct.

I am a person with good solid values, however I lack or did lack self esteem.

I realize now my own sense of personal worth.

I knew that I went through a lot of garbage since I was young, but seeing it written down on paper really sent a sad kind of realization to me.

Having gone through the reentry program was of great benefit to me. If nothing else, it has helped me to believe that I am a very worthwhile person. I found a place where I put away the feeling that I was inadequate.

I find it strange that the interviewer would say my daily log was "formal and guarded," at the time I felt like I was allowing someone in a little at a time. I was cautious but I had spent a life time being that way.

Having learned the other women had the same fears and feeling as me allowed me to examine myself. If others could succeed, so could I.

At first I found the class over powering but then I managed to see it as an opportunity

My time at NAIT was enjoyable. The other women came to me and asked me my advise.

The group structure was of great importance to me. Although each of us succeeded singly.

Each one of us got something out of this program maybe something a little different but we still got something. Our instructors were great. Understanding for the most part. Sometimes a little frustrating but with 25 women to work with it was understandable.

I would recommend a program like this to others. It is a valuable program with helpful instructors.

Kathy

On the research:

One of the right things was having the courage to change. I kept putting it off and putting it off. I didn't want to give up babysitting my cousin...I didn't have enough confidence in myself to do it. I worried that maybe I'd start somewhere and not be able to keep the job. You know, I don't have much education. I worried about that. I was looking for a job, not really hard and Ted's father saw it in the paper.

On her cheerfulness:

Some of the cheerfulness might have been a front. I wasn't happy at home but I still wasn't sure that I wanted to work. Just being out of the house made me that happy.

On the women:

At first I was a little cautious. I wasn't sure how I'd fit in or how everyone would react to me. After the first few days, everyone was so much fun. They really made you feel at home.

On control:

I have much more control now than I did when I was younger. I still might resist doing things, like if Ted told me to stop doing something, but not because I think he has the control but more out of courtesy. If he ever told me to stop working I'd say, "Sorry, no can do." I told him I'll never, never be financially dependent on you or anybody else. He thinks that's good...I became such a workaholic, I'm really surprised.

On working:

I feel good about the job. I didn't feel that I was totally incapable but I worried about the government standards like grade twelve. My supervisor told me that if I do good on the job then they can maybe find me a job in another department.

On change and loss:

(Son) had problems in school. He wasn't doing that good. He can read but he doesn't understand what he read. I think maybe it was because I was working the night shift at the (hotel). I sat him down and asked him and he just got these big tears in his eyes, "Well, I never get to see you." That made me feel really bad and I started thinking that it had to do with me. So finding a day job became really important to me.

On self-image:

I always remember what Margo says. Never go out of the house without looking your best. Like don't get caught in the mall or anything. I never wear black nylons no more - it's always beige. You know, some ways I'd change but little ways I wouldn't.

On conflict:

I don't know why I'm like that. I've never liked fights. I'm always scared someone will be hurt. I can't believe people want to inflict pain on each other. I think too, when other people's feelings are hurt like when (classmate) was crying...a million things were running through my mind to say but I didn't say it. Maybe I was scared I was going to say the wrong thing.

On women:

I think we're a lot more independent then we're made out to be. Like they always say a woman can do a million things at different times like bath the baby and feed the baby, and men can only do one thing at one time because they're not as organized as a woman is. We have to be organized like have the baby and having to feed it - you've got the supper cooking...we have to be so organized because of the mother instinct. We don't have the choice; it just comes with the territory. Things like that we can handle, like we're not only mums, we're counsellors, you've got to be the doctor, like guidance to them. There are men who take their children...It should be a partnership where you both want to help do things.

On the program:

I don't think I'd be so quiet again. Feeling better about yourself would make me not so scared to stand up and say, "Yeah, I know what you mean," or "Yeah, I can do that." I think you just need people to show you that you do have these things. I think when you're in the course and they show you your skills and you're getting a grasp on...after you've been in the house for so long and you go through a course like that and you learn what your self-esteem is...You just need someone to talk to you and bring it out in you.

On power:

Being able to do things on my own. Not always expecting people to do things for you. It makes me feel better about myself. That gives Ted the incentive to help me like he thinks, "Wow, look at her, she's been at work all day and she's cooking dinner." He feels a lot differently.

Final comment:

Everyone should take a chance in life, like me with the course. And, as you live, your knowledge just keeps growing and growing.

Carol

As mentioned previously, Carol went through the chapters dealing with her story and the group's experiences, and wrote her impressions in the margins. She disagreed with much of what was said. Those disagreements are summarized below.

The form of Carol's corrections indicated, first of all, that I often spoke to generally about her perceptions with respect to the rest of the women. For example, she did not agree that everyone had an obligation to "never stop learning," but she did feel that obligation for herself. Carol also pointed out that she felt disappointed with some of the women, but not all of them as she felt was indicated by the text.

Where Carol read that she did not speak much of the support from the rest of the group she wrote: "Not so. I needed to see my classmates and expressed this often as a boost for my ego and morale while working." She disagreed with the comment that she saw herself outside the type of woman who participated in reentry programs. Carol also saw her conflict with the staff at the hotel she began work at in a different light. Carol pointed out that the supervisor who became so difficult to work with had not displayed that behaviour while Carol was training. Carol also said: "I feel that anyone who was subject to such verbal abuse would not have stayed." Carol just felt I was wrong in my interpretation of the conflict: "I had to work directly with this one person all day. If I didn't have to I would have stayed so this still applies." It's not entirely clear what she meant by "this still applies," but this is written next to the text which speaks of Carol's different approach to conflict in the class and conflict at the workplace. She felt that it was wrong to assume that she was unable to generalize her learning from class to work. When it is mentioned that Carol is more "charitable" in her view of her peers Carol wrote: "Isn't that nice of me?" Finally, Carol did not agree that the workplace does not support the type of optimism about opportunities that is part of the classroom philosophy. In a separate summation, Carol wrote:

> I found the program very enlightening as far as learning about adult education and myself in this group. I didn't realize that adult education included personal problem solving and analyzing oneself. I agree with the statement that "the classroom work is designed to help women believe

that they can be and do whatever they want and then we send them into a working world."

I also believe that "It is not enough, however, to establish a priori that because students have come together for an identified purpose, that change and thus learning has taken place." I firmly believe that some women in the class will have not changed and will have not learned anything.

I learned things about myself that I did not know before.

Very informative, right to the point. Interesting subject! [The Research]

The knowledge learned in the course will carry over to all aspects of our lives.

Judy

This was a difficult assignment for me to write because after reading Lori's paper from the educator's as well as the friend's view, I found it extremely emotional for me.

Sitting and thinking about the course stirs up emotions that I haven't carried with me for which seems a long time.

I think about the first day, the chair that I chose to take was the one close to the door that way my escape. My escape from another failure. I felt it was just a matter of time before I was "found" out that I didn't belong.

The course took me on a path of self discovery. The first discovery was that I wasn't dealing with problems that most women weren't struggling with. I accepted situations so easily, blaming the problem on my own lack of self confidence as well as lack of self worth.

The life skills were very important to me. Even to this day I am applying skills in my day to day work environment that at one point I never dreamed they had any value.

All the small seminars were informative, some I felt not necessary but any new knowledge is never wasted. The women's issues were important, to think as I look back these were issues that I blamed myself for.

I was very true that I didn't instantly feel part of the group. I expected everyone to progress at the same speed. Little steps for women were large steps for others. Lori and Maria were great role models for me as this was my dream to be a confident career women. After spending many months with them the gap closed considerably as I realized we have the same obstacles and with my own skills and newly acquired skills from my TPH that this power was actually in my own control. I guess I'm not sure to this day exactly what method Peter used to challenge me but I have never had such an overwhelming drive to conquer my fear. I simply think that it was so draining to be afraid all the time.

Lori opened my eyes to the fact that the situation wasn't always in my control to have to take blame for everything.

To be considered a success story feels great. The humorous part is that I would actually talk to a new group - this is the same woman that was convinced for the first months that I didn't deserve to the there.

Conflict day was a major breakthrough. It was almost like a plug being pulled with fears and self blame being washed away. I now fight to overcome situations instead of fighting myself.

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APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW GUIDE - INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Interview Guide - Individual Interviews

Purpose: To assist the researcher in the collection of meaningful data by focusing on topics relevant to the research question.

Interview focus: This guide focuses on three time periods: the past, the present, and the future. The terms of reference for these time periods is determined by the respondent. This guide utilizes questions which focus on significant events in the past and present time frames of the participants. This guide also focuses on a) the role of the job re-entry program in the changes which have taken place over time in the participants' lives and b) the extent to which the job re-entry program assisted or acted as a barrier to, the participants' realization of their future goals, dreams or aspirations.

Four types of interview questions will be utilized in this interview guide (Patton, 1980):

a) experience/behaviour questions - "If I had been in that group, what would I have seen you doing?"

b) opinion/value questions - "What did you think about the presentation on dressing for success?"

c) feeling questions - How did you feel when you were told to shut up?"

d) Background questions - "Where are you from?

Past

-marriage/relationships
-length of time in one location
-reasons for engaging in a relationship
-description of married (common-law) life
-description of spouse/boyfriend
-description of typical activities
-feelings about marriage/relationship
-perceptions of the future at that time (economic goals, etc.)
-reasons for staying/leaving relationship
-children and their impact

Present

-perceptions of class and match between perceptions and actual experiences
-family support for returning to school
-feelings about starting program
-description of first day in class
-opinion of the other women

-assumptions made about the
  class/participants/trainers
-economic goals
-personal goals
-career goals
-relationship/family goals
-specific problems/barriers encountered
-program's role in helping/hindering
-feelings about belonging to particular group
-feelings/opinions of classroom activities (best/worst)
-feelings/opinions about trainers

Future

-details of employment
-reasons for unemployment
-advantages/disadvantages of working
-feelings about leaving the program
-plans for achieving goals specified on poster
-changes that have occurred (better/worse)
-things which have not changed
-opinions about significant learning
-advice for next group
-perceptions of the meaning of being a woman
-expectations for next year, next five years
-economic goals
-personal goals
-family/relationship goals
-career goals
-perception of dependence
-perception of independence
-perception of success in employment market

APPENDIX II

LETTER OF PARTICIPATION

Lori Campbell
General Delivery
Mameo Beach, Alberta
TOE 1X0

April 30, 1990

Dear ___________________,

As you probably know, I am currently working on my Masters of Education degree in Adult Education. I have decided to do my research work on the Job Re-entry program that you have just finished. What I am trying to discover is what aspects of this program did or did not empower you. This letter is asking you for your assistance.

I would like the opportunity to interview you about your experiences in the program. I am planning to interview four women individually and then interview you all as a group. I would also like to use your daily journals and other written records of your classroom experience including one-to-one feedback session, trainer and TPH evaluations and any other written record we have of our contact and interaction with you.

Your anonymity will be guaranteed. I will never use your real name or reveal any information about you, your family, your address, your worker's identity, your TPH, or your current place of employment.

Your participation in this project is strictly voluntary. You may, at any time, choose to discontinue your participation in this study. This research is also a co-operative project. You will be asked to assist me in interpreting the data and will have the right to veto any data which you feel is too sensitive to be included in this research. You will also have the opportunity, at the end of this project, to add an unedited comment. You will always have the opportunity to express any disagreement over my conclusions and interpretation of the data.

If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please feel free to call me at 586-2079 or 487-4104.

Please sign your name at the bottom of this letter if you would like to participate in this research.

Thank you,

Lori Campbell

I have read this letter and Lori has explained it to me, and I understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation in this project is strictly voluntary and that my identity will be kept completely confidential. I also agree to allow Lori to use all written documents as part of the research material. I have identified any documents that I do not want included in this research (with the exception of my journal which I understands forms part of the primary data.)

Signature of Participant Date

The following documents are not to be included in this research:

APPENDIX III

INTERVIEW GUIDE - GROUP INTERVIEW

July 3, 1990

Purpose:

To expand on themes introduced in the individual interviews and to explore these themes in greater depth.

To bring the participants up to date on the research process.

Focus:

Deal directly with the program activities and components

Explain the purpose of the group interview to participants before beginning.

Stress the participatory nature of the interview

Ask participants to reflect on the program now that they have been out of it for three months. Ask for general impressions first.

-what parts of the program did they find most useful?

-what parts of the program could have been changed or were not at all useful?

-focus on individual components in a linear fashion

-lifeskills

-experience with TPH

-NAIT

-Supervision including "Conflict Day"

-job search

-graduation/program ending

What parts of the program helped you to have greater control over your life?

What parts of the program had an effect (if any) on your relationships with others?

Was there any cost to you, personally, for the changes you underwent? For examples, how did your relationships change as a result of you participating in the program?

When you entered the program, what were your goals?

What are your goals now?

How have your goals changed over the last year?

What does power mean to you?

How have you changed personally over the past year? What are the positive changes? What do you still need to work on?

How did you feel about the program ending? How did you feel on graduation day?

What did you think of (Peter, Maria, Lori)? How did the instructors help or not help you to succeed in the program?

How could the program have made the transition to work easier for you?

What did being a part of a group of women mean to you? Did you discover anything about yourself or women in general that you hadn't been aware of before?

What are the most important tools for success?

What does the future hold for you?

Final comments?

APPENDIX IV

INVESTIGATOR'S LOG

Investigator's Log

The following time line details the development of this study from October, 1989 to September, 1990.

October, 1989 - I began work as the Life skills trainer for a CJS reentry program and it was decided that this professional experience would be the focus of my Master thesis.

January, 1990 - The first meeting was held with the thesis committee to discuss the research proposal and to provide direction for future work. In particular, the discussion focused on how the data would be collected. It was decided that interviews (individual and group) would be the tools utilized for data collection.

March, 1990 - A re-worked problem statement was presented to the advisors and the decision was made to proceed. Five women were chosen initially to participate and these women were approached informally. One of the women could not find her daily log and thus was dropped from the sample. The remaining four women signed letters of participation (see Appendix), and arrangements were discussed for the first interview.

April, 1990 - An interview schedule was drawn up and dates arranged for the interviews. The first interview was conducted on April 26, the second on April 27, the third on May 8, and the fourth on May 9. Transcriptions of the interviews were constructed and checked.

On April 13, it should be noted, the students graduated from the program.

May, 1990 - Work continued on schedule and the participants were contacted approximately mid-month to determine if they were still willing to participate in the study.

June, 1990 - This month was spent on the interpretation of the individual interviews and written data including the daily logs, as well as the literature review pertaining to the concept of power. Participants were contacted again to arrange a time for the group interview.

July, 1990 - On the third of this month, the participants gathered for the group interview with a

student in the department acting as a "participant-observer." The remainder of the month was spent in analyzing the group interview data.
Chapter five was also completed and revisions done to the first four chapters.

August, 1990 - This month focus on putting the research together as a whole. The participants were contacted one last time by phone during the second week of August and the progress of the research was reviewed with them. They then were given the opportunity to read the data analysis chapters and write a response. One of the participants responded verbally to the data interpretation. On August 31, a round draft was submitted for defense.

APPENDIX V

TRAINING AGENDA

Jewish Community Centre

Hospitality Industry Training for Women
1989-1990

Training Agenda

Oct 16	Welcome: The Job Reentry Program	Campbell
17	Self Assessment	Campbell
18	Attitudes, Motivation & Values	Campbell
19	Attitudes, Motivation & Values	Campbell
20	Personal Goals	Campbell
23	Assertiveness and Self-Esteem	Campbell
24	Assertiveness and Self-Esteem	Campbell
25	Women in Dual Roles	Campbell
26	Women in the Workplace	Campbell
27	Women's Issues	Campbell
30	Dress for Success	Cochlan
31	Professional Work Image	Cochlan
Nov 01	Stress Management	Campbell
02	Personal Finance	Campbell
03	Leisure Time	Campbell
06	Placement Interviews	
07	Placement Interviews	
08	Placement Interviews	
09	Employer/Employee Expectations	Raynor
10	Uniform Purchase	Campbell
13	Community Support Network	Campbell
14	Re-entry Success Story	
15	Work Experience	
16	Work Experience	
17	Work Experience	
20	First Aid	St. John's
21	First Aid	St. John's
22	Work Experience	
23	Work Experience	
24	Work Experience	
27	The Hospitality Industry	Campbell
28	One-to-One Feedback	Campbell
29	Work Experience	Anderson
30	Work Experience	
Dec 01	Work Experience	
04	Human Rights	Campbell
05	Work Experience	
06	Work Experience	

	07	Work Experience	
	08	Work Experience	
	11	Customer Relations	Campbell
	12	Work Experience	
	13	Work Experience	
	14	Work Experience	
	15	Work Experience	
	18	Work, Home and the Computer	Campbell
	19	Work Experience	
	20	Work Experience	
	21	Work Experience	
	22	Work Experience	
	25	Holiday	
	26	Holiday	
	27	Holiday	
	28	Holiday	
	29	Holiday	
Jan	01	Holiday	
	02	Re-entry Success Story	
	03	Work Experience	
	04	Work Experience	
	05	Work Experience	
	08	Food and Beverage Controls	NAIT
	09	Food and Beverage Controls	NAIT
	10	Food and Beverage Controls	NAIT
	11	Food and Beverage Controls	NAIT
	12	Food and Beverage Controls	NAIT
	15	Marketing	NAIT
	16	Operating Budgets	NAIT
	17	Bookkeeping and Forecasting	NAIT
	18	Personnel Administration	NAIT
	19	Management	NAIT
	22	Career Planning	Campbell
	23	Work Experience	
	24	Work Experience	
	25	Work Experience	
	26	Work Experience	
	29	One-to-one Feedback	Campbell/ Anderson
	30	Work Experience	
	31	Work Experience	
Feb	01	Work Experience	
	01	Work Experience	
	05	Resume Writing	Campbell

06	Work Experience	
07	Work Experience	
08	Work Experience	
09	Work Experience	
12	Supervision	Anderson
13	Supervision	Anderson
14	Supervision	Anderson
15	Supervision	Anderson
16	Supervision	Anderson
19	The Job Interview Process	Campbell
20	Work Experience	
21	Work Experience	
22	Work Experience	
23	Work Experience	
26	Job Search I	Campbell
27	Work Experience	
28	Work Experience	
Mar 01	Work Experience	
02	Work Experience	
05	Supervision	Anderson
06	Supervision	Anderson
07	Supervision	Anderson
08	Supervision	Anderson
09	Supervision	Anderson
12	Work Experience	
13	Work Experience	
14	Work Experience	
15	Work Experience	
16	Work Experience	
19	Job Search II	Campbell
20	Entrepreneurship I	Anderson
21	Work Experience	
22	Work Experience	
23	Work Experience	
26	Work Experience	
27	Work Experience	
28	Work Experience	
29	Work Experience	
30	Work Experience	
Apr 02	Entrepreneurship II	Anderson
03	One-to-One Feedback	Campbell
04	Work Experience	
05	Work Experience	
06	Work Experience	

06	Work Experience
09	Work Experience
10	Work Experience
11	Work Experience
12	Graduation